

**The Sikhs in Kenya: A study of their Political, Economic and Social impact, 1890
To The Present**

By

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Arts in the University of Nairobi

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DECLARATION

This Thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted for any degree award in any other university.

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Sign Job Mulati Date 1/11/2001

for Supervisor

Dr. Prem Narain

Sign M. Narain Date 1st November, 2001

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Waheguru! Waheguru! Waheguru!

ABSTRACT

In this study the social, political and economic impact of the Sikhs in Kenya 1890 to the present is addressed. The study aimed at showing the Sikhs' settlement in Kenya and how they became an important economic force. It investigates the determinants of the Sikhs' race relations, their contribution in education, health and charitable organisation. The Sikhs' political role in colonial Kenya is also investigated.

The research tested the hypothesis, that the Sikhs' role in nationalists struggle and economic impact transcended racial boundaries, that Sikhism united the Sikhs into an integrated community. And that the Sikh community has undergone transformation in their social and economic life.

The study shows Sikhs' traditional, religious and situational linkage with the Hindus that resulted in political and economic rivalry with the Indian Muslims in Kenya. The Sikhs' social institutions, their contribution in sport is brought into focus. The racial colonial structures influenced the Sikhs' social role and was reflected on economic and political realm.

In view of the above the study recommends an interdisciplinary study of the Sikhs as a historical and religious community in order to bring to light the continuity and discontinuity between the two fields. The study further recommends studies in Punjabi language as to enable researchers carry out interviews in Punjabi and read immense Punjabi literature.

Though the Sikhs' economic and political role appeared close to that of other Indians, it was immensely complementary. The Sikhs were in the Police force, they were railway workers, subordinates in the colonial government where they worked as clerks and in the public works department. Others were businessmen. Largely however, Sikhs were fitters, turners, moulders, welders, pattern makers, vulcanisers, plumbers, joiners, cabinet makers, tin smiths, mechanists, wood workers, brick layers, carpenters, masons, bicycle and rikshaw makers, upholsters and painters. The Sikhs economic role was not independent of the colonial or the global economic influences. The study shows that there was a marked correlation between Sikhs economic affluence and their establishment of magnificent temples (Gurudwaras). The study therefore recommends a comparative study of the Sikhs in Kenya and those in developed countries and or those in any other developing state of Africa.

Makhan Singh's role in the light of the Sikh environment that surrounded his youth and was exhibited in his role as a trade unionist in Kenya is interpreted. The humanistic, anti-racist and military attributes as was evident in his struggle for workers' liberation is also analysed as an influence of his up-bringing. Makhan Singh's role, was a deviation of the Sikhs' politics of behind-scenes and/or co-operation to open resistance. Thus aligning him to the Sikhs' militant attributes. The study shows how Sikh's role as exhibited in Makhan Singh's struggle was a repudiation of discriminatory practices as was instituted by the Sikh Gurus. In line with communism, Makhan Singh opposed ownership of economic affluence at the expense of the workers and attended Gurudwara for only social functions and not religious.

The white settlers' racist struggle for social, economic and political supremacy over the Indians and the competition over land and political power were addressed. The study analyses the influence of Indias' separatist politics on the Sikhs' political role in Kenya and

how it made them a catalyst in the weakening of Indians' political unity against the white settlers. The Thesis further recommends the study of the Sikhs and other Indians in Kenya. By focusing at differences and similarities and stating reasons in each case. The thesis also recommends to the Government that Sikhs are a distinct religious and historical community with her unique religious rites from the Hindu or the Muslims of Asian origin. The global society model as put by Macquet (1971) was a significant guide to the study. As a migrant community the Sikhs had to change to urban life, commerce, trade and professionalism. However they maintained_ their religion and culture, hence they acquired the characteristics of a global society model. The data was collected from the archives, oral sources and from the libraries. The sources were corroborated for authentication of evidence.

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1.0 BACKGROUND ISSUES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Sikhs contact with East Africa did not start with the emergence of Sikhism or the coming of the first Indians. Indian ships had come to the East African coast prior to the birth of the Sikhs founder Guru (teacher) Nanak in 1369. Consequently, the Indians that a Greek astronomer and geographer of the 2nd century A.D, C. Ptolemy referred to were not Sikhs. Ptolemy had gathered from the Brahmins of India at Alexandria that, the Indians traded along East Coast of Africa and that they had knowledge of the source of the Nile. This was similarly true that the Indians that Ibn Batuta (an Arab traveler who visited Africa in the 13th century) referred to were not Sikhs.

However, though the Asians started coming to East Africa centuries before the founding of Sikhism, it was the expansion of the British control over East Coast of Africa that the Indians, (more particularly Sikhs) began to appear in large numbers. The process began in the late 19th century. This was at the time when Britain was undertaking imperialist maneuvers, searching for markets for her finished goods. Thus the peak of the Sikhs influx into East Africa was during the importation of Indian labour for the construction of the Uganda railway.

During the railway construction exercise, the supply of the material, labour and personnel was contracted to a Karachi based Indian entrepreneur A.M Jeevanjee. Acting on the advice of railway engineer, the labour force from Punjab were thought to be more reliable in military, police and construction work.

The recruitment exercise however was not a downhill task. The residents of the Punjab consisted of the Sikhs who were known for their resistance to any form of intrusion. The Sikhs had fought and nearly defeated the British by the middle of 19th century in what was

referred to as the Sikh wars of 1845 - 1846 and 1848 - 1849. Though they later accepted British rule and during the Indian *sepoys* mutiny of 1857, the Sikhs sided with the British and proved dependable soldiers in the British Indian Army, it was similarly, unlikely that India's colonial government would easily yield to this recruitment. The Namdharis (a branch of the Sikhs) were opposed to everything from the British. Most of the Sikhs had become prosperous with the British colonial expansion of agriculture and construction of canals. It is thus not surprising that the recruitment exercise picked up at a slow pace. In 1895, A.M. Jeevanjee recruited and dispatched the first batch of 350 Indians via Karachi. In 1896, more Indians were disembarked at Mombasa. By 1899, a total of 18,000 Indians were working on the railway project. By 1902 out of 32,000 Indians who had come 2,493 had died 6,724 stayed on. The Sikhs among other Asians who stayed on set up independent entrepreneurship in various fields connected with their traditional skills oriented to technical areas. The remaining either joined trade, railway employment, administration, farming, or settled as independent artisans. The crucial fact is that the migration of Sikhs to Kenya did not stop even after the completion of the railway. This is also supported by the fact that many Sikhs came to East Africa not as total strangers but as relatives of already settled families in East Africa who had come, settled, succeeded and sent back home for their kith and kin to join them. The study underscores the Sikhs migration and settlement, integration in Kenya society, their possible deviation/continuity from Indian Sikhs and evaluation of the institutions/organisations they have established in Kenya between 1890 and 1963.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Sikhs are a people with history, as it can be established from various studies carried out elsewhere. This is sufficient reason for historians to study them. In India, many historical studies have been undertaken on this community for example, Khushwant, Singh, "A history

of the Sikhs", Pyne, C.N. "A short history of the Sikhs", Narang G.C. "Transformation of Sikhism" etc. For Kenya however no study has been made about them.

There is of course literature about Indians generally called Asian in Eastern Africa for example; Hilda Koppers' "Indians in Natal", Floyd and Lillian Dotson's "Indians in Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi"; Stephen Morris; "Indians in Uganda". J.S Mangat; "History of the Asians in East Africa", Gregory, R. "India and East Africa" but in these the Sikhs have remained off the focus.

Kenyan Sikhs are a minority and a distinct religious group. Since their coming, the Sikhs have not been absorbed by other fellow Asians. Their religious beliefs, practices and dress differentiate them from other Asian communities resident in Kenya. The Sikhs have their own worshipping places i.e Sikh temples (Gurudwara), religious books "Adi Granth Sahib" social organisations, for example, Sikhs Student Federation, annual festivals and a well defined code of conduct.

Written records indicate that the Sikhs came to Kenya with the advent of colonialism. They lived and prospered. Consequently, there was need to analyze the role they had played in social, political and economic fields. It was also important to identify the possible forces that have held the Sikhs community together and had left them unique as an integrated community.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

- To study the settlement of the Sikhs in Kenya and how they became an important economic force.
- Investigate the determinants of Sikhs' race relations and their contribution in education, health and charitable organisation in Kenya. Showing the continuity and or discontinuity of practices and principles between Kenyan Sikhs and Indian Sikhs.
- Ascertain the Sikhs' political role in colonial Kenya.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

- ◆ .That Sikhs role in nationalists struggle and economic impact in Kenya transcended racial boundaries.
- ◆ .That Sikhism played an important role in establishing the Sikhs as an integrated community.
- ◆ .That the Sikhs community in Kenya has undergone change in their socio-economic life.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW.

The history of the Sikhs in Kenya has attracted insufficient attention from scholars. Melcod (1976), in his book, treats Sikhs as an independent community. The author concentrates on the change pattern of the Sikh community. He differentiated Sikhism for example from Hinduism when he recorded that Sikh religion, unlike several forms of Hinduism, rejects idols, rituals and caste.

Melcod concerns himself with caste diversity of the Sikh community and the fact that the notion of status based on caste, were by no means extinct within it. However, he cautions that this was not to conceal the significant degree to which the Sikh community had succeeded in eliminating many of the discriminatory aspects of caste. The author noted that the Sikhs insistence on equality was far from being a pious myth. Freedom within the Sikh community was not a total freedom but it represented an impressive achievement nevertheless, and an endeavour which was still going on.

The fact that Melcod did not point at the Kenyan Sikhs as part of the "Sikhs abroad" that he researched upon, limits the value of his work as an applicable to Sikhs in Kenya.

Cynthia Salvador has a range of information covering various Asian cultures. The culture of the Sikhs was covered beginning from Guru Nanak the founder of Sikhism.

enunciation of Sikhs doctrine and the general pattern of Sikhs' weddings and their spread in urban centres of Kenya. However, the author was not critical and hence, she ended up giving a description of the Sikhs way of life without addressing herself to the Sikhs cultural impact in Kenya, their integration pattern, nor did she evaluate the institutions that have been set up. The author is silent over Sikh responses to challenges in Kenya, and the extent to which the Sikhs have applied their ideals of humanism and industry to the wider Kenyan society.

Harita Gurwitz, in her M.A Thesis, "The Status of Sikh Women in Nairobi" has recorded Sikh's culture and social background of Sikh women, their life styles, their roles, changes in their status, rights and obligations at different ceremonies of their life. The author was biased, only addresses Sikh women in Kenya and hence cannot be treated as representative of the entire body of Sikh community. Apart from the introduction, most of the information is without dates. The author records nothing as concerns the Sikhs political impact in Kenya.

Hill, M.F(1944) and Bartlett, H(1956) respectively treat Asian as a homogenous community. They note the employment of Indentured Asian Labour, for the construction of the Uganda railway and employment of British Indian troops for the pacification of East African territories.

Hill, however was limited because he did not consult the library of colonial office or other libraries in London. As a result he relied on biased official report which inevitably lack human interest. Hill admitted to have relied on written sources. He thus did not get in touch with eye-witnesses who could only be reached through oral interviews. Consequently most of his information was a representative of a section of literate members of society and had to be analysed alongside other sources that were not consulted in order to authenticate his record.

Delf(1963) , outlined information on social and economic conditions of the Asians in East Africa. He mentioned Muslims, Hindus and Goans as major groups of Asians in East

Africa. He also mentions the Arya Samaji, Jains and the Sikhs as small communities. With regard to the Sikhs, the author noted that they number about 20 000 and that they were dominantly found in Kenya. Delf further noted that the Sikhs were assertive and had many of their own institutions, they had won niche for themselves as mechanics, and railway-men. However, the author did not proceed to explore the history of the Sikhs.

In Bharati, A(1972). is an anthropological study of the Asians. Bharat investigated the stagnation and changes of the Indian's belief system and their value orientations. The author admitted that he did not fully deal with the economic situation of Asians, because according to him economic situation was highly complex and merited a separate study. The author mentions the two Sikh groups found in East Africa, the Jat and Ramgarhias, but does not discuss the history of these communities. Furthermore, though he addressed pertinent features of race animosity between Africans and Asians with regard to their integration in Kenya and its effect on racial tension with the Africans, however failed to address the efforts advanced or challenges faced by for example Sikhs to integrate in the Kenyan society.

Hollingsworth(1960), is a serious however brief attempt to the study of the Asians in East Africa and not Sikhs. It is limited because of being too brief and by being a general survey of the subject, worse still covered in an outline form. The book is also limited by the fact that the author consulted a small range of primary sources.

Ghai Dharam (ed)(1965), contains articles covering political, social, economic and educational Survey showing various aspects of Asian problems and prospects in East Africa. Ghai in his book concluded that the Asians were weak because they lacked leadership, cohesion and vision. He saw Asian's different religion, language and caste as dividing them. Like Ghai, Desai R.H in "The Family Enterprise Among Asians in East Africa", noted that Asian Economic business relationship are based on kinship and caste as applying to all Indians without regard to constituent communal differences amongst Asians. Ghai noted that,

the Asians took up business because of the restrictive colonial policies that denied Indians access to land.

Though Ghai began by indicating the difficulties that were inherent in studying Asians in East Africa en bloc, however the authors of various articles in the book did not go beyond the periphery and focus at individual Asian community's contribution in terms of political and economic Survey that were covered. The book is silent as regards the evaluation of the institution set up by the specific Asian communities like the Sikhs.

Walji, P. concurs with Ghai, over the percentage of Asians who took up businesses. Walji, recorded in seminar paper, Sociology Department, University of Nairobi "The Asian in Transition" that by 1948, 82.2% of the Indian population in Kenya were involved in private business and commerce.

in Makhan Singh (1980), there is narrative information devoid of critical analysis, showing among other areas of trade unionism in Kenya, a biography of Makhan Singh. It is recorded that Makhan Singh was a non-violent Marxist who sought to improve the position of the workers not through violent revolution but through trade unionism, democratically organized. That by April 1935, Makhan had succeeded in transforming the Indian Trade Union of Kenya with himself as its secretary. Makhan's aim in reorganizing the union was to create a multi-racial body, where race would be subordinate to class, however this remained a pious dream up to 1939. The book further elaborates Makhan's role in covering annual trade union meetings beginning September 1936 up to 1950. Trade unionism in Kenya from 1935 - 1950 owes its success mostly to the vision, dedication and selflessness of this one person Makhan Singh. However the author looks at Makhan Singh in isolation of Sikh culture and characteristics.

The author shows a significant contribution of the Sikh community as portrayed in one Makhan, but since the book does not interpret Makhan Singh's, principles and role in the light of his up-bringing environment lowers its value as an applicable to the Sikhs.

Mangat, J.S (1969), himself a Sikh addressed the Asians as a homogenous community without regard to the Indian's communal differences. The Asians political activities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda between 1886 to 1945 and not that of the Sikhs is put under focus. Mangat also carried out his work chronologically and hence he fell prey to the dangers inherent in chronological approach to the study of history. In such a format of historical study not all themes are adequately addressed, some are either omitted or inefficiently addressed. The second chapter of his book begins in the interior of 1886 to 1902 while the next growth of economical role 1902 to 1921. Thus the author left out events prior to 1902 as well events that came after 1921.

Mangat's book, thus is not representative of the Sikhs social, political nor economic role. Furthermore, Mangat had complained of mixed source materials that impaired his progress.

Gregory R.G(1971), though it is triangular study of race relations, within the British East Africa, German East Africa and Indian British conflict in South Africa covering 1890 and 1930, it is not representative of the Sikhs history in Kenya. Gregory's study only covered the emergence of Indian Nationalism, the growth of Indian politics and the evolution of Indian intellectual history as a solitary community without reference to the Sikh community. Similarly, the fact that Gregory's book does not go beyond 1939, limited his contribution.

Narain, P, in the article "Asians in East Africa: Some reflections on historiography and source material", gives a guideline to study of the Asians by keenly making an assessment of the materials that was available at the time. The author noted that, there was a large scope of

study about Asians in Kenya. He recommended that, for the study of the Asians to be completed, the history of individual Asian communities had to be covered.

Shanti, Pandit(1963), records that the Asians contact with East Africa began by 7th century AD. The author narrates events beginning with Indian Arab relationship at the East African coast, Asian Portuguese relationship. Pandit notes that, the main mission of the Asians was to civilise the Africans but not to exploit them. The author further noted that the Asians financed Arab slave caravans to enslave Africans.

Shanti Pandit was biased for example he wanted us to believe that enslavement was part of civilising the Africans. Shanti Pandit, took an unhistorical stand of value judgement and hence his contribution cannot be treated as serious historical work.

Asians have also been addressed as a solitary group by Morris, H.S(1968), where he indicates the ethnographic presence of Asians in Kenya and Uganda. Donald's Rotchild¹⁵ is yet another homogenous sociological study of Asians as a solitary community. It shows the population and a brief social history of the Asians during the colonial period.

In all however, the study of the Sikhs has remained begging for research.

1.6 RATIONALE OF STUDY

The history of the Sikhs in Kenya is one aspect of the Asian past that calls for serious study. This is evident from the literature reviewed. Studies on the Asians by historians, social scientists, colonial government officials and even travellers who visited Kenya, only mention Sikhs in passing. No comprehensive study of the Sikhs has so far been undertaken.

One major aspect that makes it imperative to study the Sikh community is the fact that they are among the first Asian community to intermarry with African in notable numbers. The case of Meru and particularly Ntonyiri, Kianjai, Lare Mकिनदुरि, where most of the Sikhs, had come as indentured labourers to work on Uganda railway or as members of the British forces during the first World War and settled as petty traders, inter-married with

African women. The result has been the creation of an Afro-Asian community in Meru. The emergence of the community warrants study in terms of influence and integration in relation to the traditional African environment.

Ghai D.P. (1965:15)¹ while in his study significantly noted "It is impossible to deal with Indian minority in East Africa en-bloc. Ideally each of these groups should be dealt with quite separately, for they form more autonomous sub-cultures". Additionally to amalgamate the entire Asian community in Kenya as one community becomes complicated by the fact that, linguistic and commercial divisions, trans-group relations, in-group coherence and a whole range of sociological diversifying elements have to be addressed. This lack of uniformity requires individual studies of which the Sikhs are a part. From the available literature it is manifest that studies have been done on other Asian communities in Kenya, like Arya Samajist, Jains, Oshwals, Ismailis, Muslims, Goans, Hindus, etc. In India Sikhs are distinct. They have even raised demand for a separate state. The study will establish how far this distinctiveness has survived in alien country like Kenya and how they have managed to retain their separate identity during colonial period and after.

The Sikhs are among the first Asian communities in Kenya to venture into farming in low land assigned to them by the Europeans in Kibos in Kisumu. In Kenya Sikhs have played a role in construction as engineers, architects, in trade and industry, in medicine, they have set up hospitals for example the Guru Nanak Hospital. Sikhs have played a distinguished role in sports especially motor races called "safari rally" where Joginder Singh held a world title. J.S Mangat, a Sikh had enhanced academic excellence by writing distinguished works of history "A History of Asians in East Africa 1886-1945". Makhan Singh is yet another Sikh. He played an important role as a trade unionist, his book "History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952" is well known. Makhan did identify himself with the nationalistic course

in Kenya. In essence, it is on the basis of distinct contributions of the Sikhs as a community in Kenya that calls upon an independent study of this community.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study centres on a community that migrated from their homeland in Punjab to the new environment in East Africa. The Sikhs had to change to urban life, commerce, trade and professionalism in their new place of adaptation. They had to seek economic, political and social survival, and, at the same time maintain their identity by conforming to their religion and culture. In essence, the Sikhs acquired characteristics of a global society as put by Macquet (1971:4). By global society Maquet meant, clusters of social relationships separated from one another by areas of rare diffuse interaction. To Macquet,

The global society is self-perpetuating, (it contains both men and women) maintaining its identity over several generations (it has institutions which pass on the experience of the adults to the young), and defending itself from external dangers as well as internal forces of disintegration. It also provides for the point of view of each of its members, a framework for life from birth to grave. One can grow up, marry, work and grow old without even having to 'step outside' ones global society.²

It is evident that the Sikhs in Kenya have organised activities for example their religious rite, dressing pattern and institutions which pass on the experience of the adults, to the young, and defend itself from external and internal forces of disintegration. Sikhism also provides a framework for life from birth to death and meets their spiritual and physical needs and assures their continuity as a group.

Sikhism is an objective concept in the sense that not only those who are part of it, but also neighbours and outside observers recognise it as such.

The colonial policies in Kenya created distinctions, such that people were categorised according to race. The European held the first position, the Asians next and African were

inferior third. The colonialists sealed interactions between the Africans and the Asians, hence each community remained on its own, in terms of religion, culture, language, ideas etc. This state of affairs did not end with decolonisation but has persisted even in the independent Kenya. In administrative, economic and to a small scale in political affairs the Sikhs met with other Kenyans but remained distinct. The Sikhs have economic linkages with other communities in Kenya but less friendship. Not many Sikhs intermarried with local African women, for those who inter-married, their families and offspring have remained as islands in their respective environment.

Within the above framework, the researcher sought to investigate the Sikhs impact in terms of political, economic and social life in Kenya as members of a community that is distinct, though as part of wider plural society of Kenya³. The researcher established the impact of dependence relationships between the Sikh community and the Kenyan society. Maquet (1971:191) noted.

"every natural and manufactured articles, every living entity and every action is dependent upon something, and conditioned by things outside itself".⁴

1.8 METHODOLOGY

The information was collected from both oral and written sources.

The researcher spent sixteen weeks consulting written sources in the libraries and archives in Kenya and India. The libraries visited in Kenya include, Jomo Kenyatta memorial library of University of Nairobi, Institute of African Studies library of University of Nairobi, Indian High commission library at Nairobi, Kikuyu campus library of Nairobi University, British council library Nairobi, Kenya National library Nairobi and Sikh council library at Pangani. While in India, the researcher visited Delhi University library, Punjab University library Chandigarh, Punjab University library Patiala, Guru Nanak Development University library Amistar and Jawaharlal Nehru University library. In the libraries, I went through all

the relevant books, periodicals, serials, journals, annual reports, newspapers, magazines, biographies, Thesis, etc.

At Kenya National Archives, the researcher read old newspapers, eg. "The East African Standard" "Barasa" "Settler newspaper" "Colonial Times", 'Sunday Post'. Personal diaries eg. Makhan Singh's papers are archived. Private letters, dubbed speeches of nationalists, speeches of government officials, and microfilmed documents, materials from Sikh Gurudwara, were also consulted.

I spent eighteen weeks in the field carrying out oral interviews. The main site of field research was Nairobi, Meru, Makindu, Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret. This gave us an opportunity to interact with respondents in their socio-religious and economic environment. Oral interviews made us come directly in contact with respondents who had in person participated in social, political and economic development of the Sikhs. T.S Nandhra, a Sikh and was a councilor in the colonial Kenya was versed with the Sikhs History and culture. Alongside was Rattan Kaur Chana, who told us a lot with regard to Sikh women and their changing roles in the traditional and modern Sikh society. Grewal Kaur, a daughter of the pioneer hockey player Mahan Singh accessed us to News paper cuttings where her father featured while receiving trophies. While in India, I interacted with scholars at five Universities Punjab, Delhi, Punjabi, Guru Nanak Dev university Amritsar and Jawaharlal Nehru University. The informants were those people who had reached in a position of being conversant with the problem of research.. Both Sikhs and non-Sikhs were interviewed for the purposes of corroborating evidence. Religious leaders, Association or institution leaders, the chairmen of Sikh Gurudwara, businessmen, Sikh social workers, Kenyan Sikh government officials of either colonial and/or post-colonial period, teachers and descendants of early Sikh settlers in Meru were interviewed.

The questionnaire was prepared on the spot because of the problem inherent in sustaining a ready questionnaire in historical research. In most cases informants go out of the way to explain important events that may not have been covered in the questionnaire.

The entire research involved the main researcher and four research assistants.

END NOTES

1. Dharam, P. Ghai ed. Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa, Nairobi Oxford University Press, London, New York 1965 P. 14.
2. Maquet, J. Power and Society in Africa, Translated from the french by Jeannett Kupfermann, World University Library, McGraw - Hill Book company New York, Toronto 1971 P 14.
3. Furnival, J.S. Colonial Policy and Practice, Cambridge University Press, London, 1948 P.304.

In Burma, as in Java probably the first thing that strikes a visitor is the medley of peoples, Europeans, Chinese, Indians and natives. It is in the strictest sense a medley for they meet but do not combine, each group holds by it's own religion, it's own culture and language, it's own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in market place in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political unit.³

4. OP. Cit. P. 191.

CHAPTER ONE

2.0 THE SIKHS' RACE RELATIONS AND THEIR SOCIAL IMPACT IN KENYA (1890 - 1990)

2.1 OVERVIEW

The Sikhs in Kenya are resultants of the process of transformation of Sikh society. The Sikhs of Guru Nanak (The founder of Sikhism), the clean shaven *sahajdhari*s are unknown in Kenya. They are categorized as those who had been Sikhs but backslid from Sikhism. However, this does not mean that the Sikhs in Kenya overlook the Sikh tenets propounded by the pioneer Gurus. They instead encompass them and respect the teachings of the ten Gurus (The founder Teachers of Sikhism) and the changes that Sikhism acquired during the reign of different Gurus. Outwardly Sikhs in Kenya are Sikhs of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. He founded them in April 13, 1699 on the Hindu new year day, known as Baisakhi. They are identified by the long beard, turban, *kesh* long hair, *kangha* comb, *kara* iron bracelet, *kirpan* sword, and *kachha* under-wear normally larger than the normal sizes, worn by both men and women. All Sikh men are called *Singh* meaning lion and female *Kaur* princess. To the African Kenyans, Sikhs are *Kalasinghas*, the reference is limited to the turbaned Sikhs.

The teaching of the Gurus, according to the Sikhs complemented each other. However not all Sikh Gurus agreed in principle, for example, while Guru Nanak denounced the doctrine of asceticism, the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh chose Banda Singh Bahadur, (his army officer) an ascetic to avenge on the Muslim leaders who had killed his sons and mother.

The word Sikh has Sanskrit origin, it was derived from "Sishya" meaning disciple¹. A Sikh, within this understanding is a disciple who believes in one God and the teaching of the ten Gurus, starting from its founder, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), up to the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) and in the Sikhs holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. As a result of

conservatists (keeping of the status quo of Sikhism) and conformists (coping with the changing environment) there emerged a branch of Sikhs in the later part of 18th century called the Nirankaris and Namdharis. They believed that the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh was not the last human Guru. Instead, up to date, the Namdharis believe in the existence of a human Guru. Within the Indian constitution, a Sikh is one who believes in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. A 'Guru' to the Sikhs was a teacher, to guide Sikhs across the fearful ocean of life. He was not to be adored.

Among the Asians in Kenya, Sikhs have roots in the Punjab. The word Punjab etymologically means, the land of five rivers. *Punji*, in Punjabi means 'five' and *Abi* is water. Earlier the region of North West India was called '*Sapta Sindhya*' land of seven rivers by the Aryans who went to the Punjab and found there seven rivers. The Persians who came earlier called it '*Hapta Hindva*', similarly meaning land of seven rivers. After river Sarasvati dried up and people gradually started to overlook the Indus river because it merely marked the Western boundary of the province it was renamed Punjab, 'land of five rivers'. The other Punjabi groups, found in Kenya and other parts of East Africa, particularly Tanzania include Hindus and Muslims, all of them came from the North western part of the Indian sub-continent prior to its partition in August 1947.

The genesis of the shaping the social, political and economic history of all the Sikhs was not only religion but the environment. It was because of the environment, under which Sikhs lived that they adopted agriculture and related crafts like artisan. The Jat became predominantly rural dwellers in India, while the Ramgarhias became both rural and urban dwellers. The latter were traditionally classified as Craftsmen. *Tarkhans* (Carpenters) *Lohaars* (black smiths) and *Raj* (brick layers). They were low in social status compared to the Jat Sikhs according to the traditional hierarchical system prevailing in the Punjab. Both groups are found in Kenya. The Ramgarhias constitute the majority. They are in different occupations but closely related to their Indian traditional occupations.

The Punjab, the main homeland of the Sikhs historically had been the battle field. All invaders of India except the British entered India through Punjab, it was the main overland gate into India, through the Khyber Pass. The invaders settled in the conquered domain of the Punjab, inter-married with the local Punjabi women and as a result the ancestry of the invaders Mongols, the Persians and the Turks came to constitute the Sikhs inheritance³. Many languages like Arabic, Persian and Turkish which came to be spoken in the Punjab, influenced Punjabi language.

The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak set in motion the evolution of a new spiritual community. He

rang the alarm bell and saved masses from false religions...He released people from the rule of formalism and the parrot-like repetition of scripture....⁴

Sikhism has two models, the professed by founders and the practised in life situations. These models provide the impetus to the followers to strive towards achieving the ideal (the professed). Guru Nanak and the nine Sikh Gurus, who came after him, set up a spiritual and moral standard for the Sikhs. They stood for equality, liberty, justice, and universal brotherhood⁵. They instilled among the Sikhs, an understanding of the temporal nature of the universe where they had to live during their existence on earth. The Sikh Gurus stood for the fulfilment of man's social life (as recorded later in this chapter). The Gurus directed the individual to spiritual objectives, so that, a Sikhs' life and activity came to have a spiritual dimension as well as the earthly. The Sikhs consider the world and humanity as God's real creation⁶. Sikhs believe in fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humanity. Guru Nanak, spiritualised material world as Gods' creation so that the earth, though a subject of time and space, was purposeful. All men in Sikhism were equal irrespective of colour, caste, creed or race because they were Gods' manifestation⁷

During Guru Nanak's time, Indian society was characterised by rigid caste system brought about by, Brahmnical revival. It was a terrible sin for a *Shudra* (the lowest rank

before the outcaste according to the Hindu hierarchical grading of people) to hear a vedic

hymn. A Hindu was not free to associate with the lower caste person. Inter-caste marriage, initially common in ancient India had ceased. Material progress had become impossible because ability and skill had been clipped and replaced by caste laws, which made occupation a hereditary. Guru Nanak preached at the time when bigotry and superstition was rife. Muslims on the other hand forced Hindus into their fold, and those who refused were killed. The converts had to refrain from eating pork, forbidden by the Quran, be circumcised (for male converts) and fast during the month of Ramadhan. Guru Nanak, denounced discrimination based on caste, creed, race or religion, and proclaimed, that both Musalman and Hindu were brothers.⁸ Guru Nanak thus, emphasised the intrinsic essence of humanity. Sikhs in Kenya as elsewhere, have not measured up to the ultimate qualities of integration as was propounded by the Sikh founder Gurus.

Efforts towards social equality among the Sikhs was demonstrated at the communal inter-dining *langar* (free communal kitchen), it is a central part of the Sikh Gurudwaras, all the Gurudwaras have a *langar*. Traditionally Guru Nanak started '*Langar*' communal kitchen. He set up the first communal kitchen at Kartarpur, where people brought ingredients and fuel to prepare communal meals. Every Sikh had and has a duty to contribute towards the running of the *Langar*. After Guru Nanak, the third Guru, Amardas, ordained the *langar*, such that, all visitors, who came to see him had first to partake in the *Langar*.

The institution of *Langar* in Kenya is not successfully integrated. It is more popular among the Sikhs but not partaken of by Africans. This is a result of mutual suspicion between the Sikhs and Africans as people of different faiths. Thus distancing spiritual ideal from practical. It also downplays Sikhs' belief in universal brotherhood that had to be expressed in righteous deeds⁹. By virtue of one being a Sikh these devolved a responsibility to achieve the level where spiritual idealism took precedence over secular values.¹⁰

In Kenya like India, the *Langar* is a central part of all the Gurudwaras. The pioneer Sikhs who built the first Gurudwara instituted *Langar* in Kenya. At Nairobi this was initiated

immediately Sikhs arrived there in 1899 and by 1901 Sardar Kishen Singh, Kartar Singh, Bishen Singh, Kapoor Singh and Kesar Singh build a small Gurudwara on Racecourse Road.

Although it is believed that all humanity to the Sikhs is one, yet it is far from being practised. Guru Nanak's preaching was for uniting humanity¹¹. Different religions, according to Guru Nanak were different routes through which, light entered the soul of man. Accordingly, the nature of the rays of light was not different, much as the density could vary. The differences in religion did not justify conflict or rivalry.¹² Nanak respected all religions that emphasised the suzerainty of God. For the Sikhs there was to be no distinction between the God of all religions. There was only one God whose qualities were described as incomprehensible, timeless and all pervading. The nature of God was beyond mans' capacity to comprehend or to describe. Sikhism was thus opposed to animosity in society brought about by different religious beliefs.

The founder of Sikhism demonstrated unity of humanity. He travelled in the company of Mardana a Muslim, and Bala a Hindu. Mardana remained a companion of Guru Nanak for a long time. After he died at Baghdad, Guru Nanak, like Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples, played the part of a servant, performed his obsequies and erected a memorial over his grave¹³. Guru Nanak's relationship with Mardana did not end after his demise. He employed, Mardana's son named Shahzada to sing holy hymns. The reconciliation role that Guru Nanak initiated between the Hindus and Muslim was carried forward after him. The second Sikh Guru, Guru Angad employed two Muslim minstrels, Satta and Balwant to sing sacred songs at the time of worship. A Muslim saint Mian Mir of Lahore set the foundation stone of Hari Mandar of Amritsar built by Guru Arjun (fifth Sikh Guru). Guru Arjun included the hymns of Muslim saints and minstrels in the holy Guru Granth Sahib. There are 541 from Kabir, Farid 134, Mardana 3, Satta and Balwand 3.¹⁴ Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh Guru put Paindah Khan in command of Parthans. Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura gave 700 of his disciples under the command of Guru Gobind Singhs' sons. In

1702 Mir Beg and Mamun Khan commanded Guru's forces, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, a Muslim, helped Guru Gobind Singh to escape the Muslim rulers wrath. Qazi Pir Muhammed saved Guru Gobind's life by even falsely stating before the Muslim soldiers that Guru Gobind Singh was a Muslim Saint known to him. A Muslim chief, Rai Kalha of Raekot entertained Guru Gobind Singh during his flight.¹⁵

Despite the fact that Sikhs' founder Gurus emphasised unity of humanity its observance by the followers falls below the mark. Instead of universalism they began to underline their exclusive cultural heritage¹⁶. As a result Sikhs social life in Kenya, like in India is predominantly Punjabi. Sikhs' demand for their own independent state of Khalistan in India had both political and social reasons. Social interest was linked to the maintenance and preservation of their identity.¹⁷ Sikhs in Kenya demonstrated keen interest to what happens in India generally, but more specifically to their fellow Sikhs in the Punjab¹⁸. There has been concern among the Sikhs in Kenya to retain their mother tongue Punjabi in order to keep their religion, culture and identity. In U.K the Sikh community leaders requested the government to make provision for the teaching of Punjabi as part of the school curriculum¹⁹. In Kenya there is provision for teaching of Sikhism, under Hindu Religious Education. Thus, despite the fact that the Sikh Gurus, particularly the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, propounded Sikhism unhampered by geographical, caste or creed limitations, Sikhism in Kenya is practically found among the Punjabis.

The pioneer Sikhs in Kenya were socially pre-occupied with the preservation of their community than propagate the unity inherent in Sikhism, and drifted to social separatists. An effort to sustain their religion, culture and identity both in India and Kenya was however affected by modernity. The challenges include, advances in technology, particularly the electronic media and education, which exposed the youths to secular music, cinemas and dressing. As result, there arises disuse of the turbans and clipping of hair. Sikhism unlike Hinduism or Islam is, faced with greater danger because of visible disappearance of outward

signs.

After having considered, the general characteristics of Sikhs abroad, we can then focus on the specifics. First by analysing the Sikhs inter and intra-communal relationships, the Sikhs race relations, their social organisations, institutions and their impact on Kenyan society.

Sikhs as part of the Punjabis in East African, region constitute 20% of the Asian population. Many live in Kenya where they constitute majority of Punjabis both in numerical strength and influence. This is like India, where they constitute 2% of the entire Indian population, but economically very stable. They have higher per capita income. The Punjab state (the homeland of the Sikhs) has higher life expectancy than India's national average. The other Indian immigrant communities in Kenya include the Gujarati and Cutchi speaking Hindus constituting 70% of the Asians in East Africa. The Gujarati and Cutchi speaking Muslims are numerically equivalent to the Punjabis found in East Africa. Other smaller Asian (Indian) communities in East Africa include the Gujarati speaking Jains, the Patels, the Goans, the Maharastrians the Parsees and Sindhis. It is with these communities, more specifically Hindus and Muslims that this chapter seeks to explore their relationships with the Sikhs.

The Sikhs in Kenya, like the 19th century India were demographically classified together with the Hindus. The census of 1911 in Kenya (see data below) had this manifestation. This reflected the initial small numerical strength of the Sikhs, and the assumed social linkages between them. In India, Sikhs remained without a clear-cut legal definition as distinct group. This partly anchored on the fact that a section of the Sikhs, for a long time paid homage to both the Sikh Gurus in addition to Hindu deities. The Europeans similarly regarded the two faiths, and traditions as inter-linked and overlapping. In 1853, for example, Sir Richard Temple, the Secretary of State of India noted:

The Sikh faith and ecclesiastical polity is rapidly going where the Sikh political ascendancy has already gone... The Sikhs of Nanak, a
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comparatively small body of peaceful habit and old family will perhaps cling to the faith of their fathers, but the Sikhs of Gobind who are of a more recent origin, who are more specially styled the Singhs or lions, and who embraced the faith as being the religion of warfare and conquest no longer regard the Khalsa now that the prestige has departed from it. These men joined in thousands, and they now depart in equal numbers. They rejoin the ranks of Hinduism whence they originally came, and they bring up their children as Hindus. The sacred tank at Anritsar is less thronged than formerly and the attendance at the annual festival is diminishing yearly. The initiation ceremony for adult person is now rarely performed²⁰.

The overlapping Sikh/Hindu identity in India remained a common phenomenon until 1898²¹.

With passage of time, after 1911 the Sikh population in Kenya increased and the census of 1926 drew a distinction between the Sikhs and Hindus. In that year, the Sikhs numbered 2,089, and by 1962, the Sikhs had increased to 21,169. The greater number of Sikh emigrants to Kenya apart from natural increase, was drawn by the British who brought them during Railway construction and the first and the second world wars and during the post World War II building-boom. Additionally Sikhs were pushed out of the sub-continent as a result of animosity, which followed the partition of India in 1947. In that year the communal war broke out between the Sikhs and Muslims (see Ch. iv.). The data below is explicit of the Sikhs' demographic changes²² in Kenya.

Asian Population by Religion.

RELIGION	YEAR				
	1911 Population	1926 Population	1931 Population	1948 Population	1962 Population
Hindu & Sikhs	3,205				
Hindu	-	12,262	19,748	51,395	97,841
Muslim	5,939	11,520	15,006	27,585	40,057
Sikhs	-	2,089	4,427	10,621	21,169

The inter-communal relationship between the Sikhs and other Indians (particularly the Hindus) at the turn of the 20th century was amicable. This was unlike in India, where the Sikhs continuously sought for political and social identity, which often led to hostility among them. The social link between the two in Kenya had situational factor (being in a foreign

country), religious and historical reasons. Sikhs and Hindus relationships were based on common culture and geographical descent. The founder Gurus of Sikhism were born as Hindus. The foreign and isolated environment abroad in which the Sikhs and Hindus found themselves in Kenya threw them back, to revisit their historical and cultural past. Guru Nanak was born in a Kshatriya clan at Talwandi Rai Bhoi. He was born at the time when India was undergoing critical moments. The rulers of India at that time lived in luxury and cared the least for their subjects. Guru Nanak described his times as,

the age is like a knife, the kings have become butchers, Religion has taken wings and flown in the dark night of falsehoods, I cannot see where the moon of truth is rising - modesty and religion have disappeared because false-hoods reigns supreme.²³

India was gradually falling into the hands of the Mughals (Muslim leaders). Hindu society was dominated by the Brahmin and was divided in castes. The Muslims were imposing, their faith on the Hindus. Guru Nanak created out of this a well-knit body of people who disapproved of discrimination based on caste, creed or race. Many of the Sikhs came from the lowly of the Hindu caste hierarchy and became the defenders of the Hindus against the Muslim tyranny.

The Sikh-Hindu relationship in Kenya was similarly enshrined in the harmonising teachings of the founder Gurus enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib. During evolution of Sikhism, Guru Nanak adopted from the Hindu, the wisdom of the past as was contained in the Vedas and the Puranas. He, however, stressed on some to suit the new religion, 'Sikhism'. He revitalised some of the neglected, however, important tenets of the vedic teaching. Guru Nanak set an example for harmony between the Hindus and Sikhs:

The Sikh Gurus, who came after Nanak propounded unity between the Sikhs and Hindus. Guru Amardas, the 3rd Sikh Guru, demonstrated a friendly co-existence between the Hindus and the Sikhs. He appealed to the Mughal Emperor not to levy tax upon the Hindu pilgrims who visited Haridwar on the sacred river Ganges²⁴. Similarly, Guru Amardas prior

to his conversion to Sikhism had been a devout Hindu. Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru, respected the 'Vedas' as a repository of God's message, he admitted that the 'Vedas' contained the pure name of God however, the ignorant men (referring to Hindus, particularly Brahmins) did not listen to it and wandered in illusion *maya*. To Guru Arjun, the 'Vedas', the 'Puranas' and the Smritis, were made pure and holy by the letters of the name (nam) of one Parmat man (God) that embodied in them²⁵. Guru Arjun built bridges of understanding. He taught that the God worshipped by Hindus and Sikhs was the same only differing in language,

All speak but his language in a variety of ways, though himself remained unchanged..." One whose heart dwelleth the one pure Name of God hath recognised the essence of the 'Vedas'²⁶.

While compiling the Sikhs holy book, the Siri Guru 'Granth Sahib' Guru Arjun included hymns of Hindu and Muslim mystics. Guru Hargobind (Sikhs' sixth Guru) refused amnesty extended to him by Mughal ruler, Jehangir by demanding the release of fifty-two Hindu Rajas. During Diwali celebrations, Sikhs are reminded of the selfless sacrifice of Guru Hargobind to the Hindus.

The ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Behadur demonstrated solidarity with the Hindus. He accepted to die a martyr for the sake of Hindu symbols the sacred thread *Janeau* and Hindu forehead mark *Tilak*. This took place at Anand Pur. The Kashmir Hindus, led by Kirpa Ram went to seek Guru Tegh Behadur's help to escape forced conversion to Islam, which at that time was being perpetrated by the then Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. Guru Tegh Behadur before proceeding to face Aurangzeb, nominated his nine year old son Gobind Rai (later Gobind Singh) as the tenth Guru. At Delhi Guru Tegh Behadur challenged the tyranny of Aurangzeb on behalf of the Hindus. He refused conversion to Islam even though he was subjected to extreme torture. Guru Tegh Behadur was beheaded in Delhi and died a martyr. Sikhism was concerned with the fundamental right to religious freedom, co-existence

and tolerance both at individual and group level.

On the historical plane, the Sikhs and Hindus had a common history and common enemy in India, the Mughal leaders, who came to represent Muslims, indiscriminately inflicted atrocities on the two groups Sikhs and Hindus. Towards the end of 17th century for example in 1699, the Mughal leader Aurangzeb ordered the closure of Hindu schools and the demolition of non-Muslim religious shrines²⁷. The Sikhs in particular were driven to adopt militant attributes against the Muslims after the murder of their fifth Guru, Guru Arjun. He was killed on frame-ups and subsequently forced Sikhs into militancy.²⁸ Guru Hargobind 6th Sikh Guru (Arjun's son) succeeded his father as a spiritual and secular leader. He took to arms, and carried two swords for earthly and spiritual war²⁹. The militarisation of the Sikhs took a final turn at the time of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). He succeeded his father at the age of nine years and marked a clear-cut transformation of Sikhism both internally and externally as military. He established both an anti-caste and self sacrifice community of the Sikhs by instituting a form of baptism and gave the baptised Sikhs the common name the *Khalsa Waheguru* the Lords own, with a unifying common name Singh. They were given five distinct external characteristics called five K's, which stood for *Kesh*, un-cut hair, *Kangha* (Comb to keep it in place) *Kaccha* (a pair of short for both women and men, suitable for military service), *kara* (an iron bracelet) and *Kirpan* (a sword). After Guru Gobind Rai had initiated the five Sikhs, knelt down and he was similarly initiated into the brotherhood. He was given a new name Singh, and he became Guru Gobind Singh. Thus Guru Gobind Singh was integrated into the Sikh brotherhood. In address to the initiated Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh emphasised the need for the Sikhs to remain united, mix freely regardless of differences of their former religion³⁰. From childhood Guru Gobind Singh was exposed to Sikhs suffering. He sanctioned the use of a sword when other remedial measures had failed,

...although love and forgiveness are stronger than hate and revenge, once a person was convinced that the adversary meant to destroy him, it was his
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duty to resist the enemy with all the means at his disposal for it was a battle of the survival, not only of life, but ideals. It became the *Dharma Yudh* (the battle for the sake of righteousness).³¹

Thus, Guru Gobind transformed the Sikhs into soldier saint. In his career, he was influenced by the atrocities, which were inflicted on the Sikhs largely by the Muslims. From childhood, Guru Gobind Rai thus came to believe that he was born to exterminate evil and enhance righteousness in his biography he made this stand clear.

...the only reason I took birth was to see that righteousness may flourish that the good may live, and the tyrants be torn out by their roots³²

As a saint soldier, Guru Gobind Singh, like Hargobind collected arms, ammunitions, horses and elephants, and started to train his followers to become soldiers. As soldiers Sikhs fought against evil.

By establishing the 'Khalsa' Guru Gobind Singh built a fearless, selfless and casteless nation of the Sikhs. The subsequent Sikh-Muslim wars made them (Sikhs) be regarded as the Hindus military wing³³. Later, Sikh military quality embittered them with the Muslims. This was at the time when the British enhanced the divide and rule policy by employing many Sikhs into the high ranks in the armed forces as the Muslims were reduced, particularly after 1857. Lou Singh, a white Sikh, referred to the Sikhs martial attributes as those who wore

... the crown of immortality. You may scan in vein the pages of modern India History, to find heroism so remarkable, courage so reckless, or gallantry so unique³⁴.

Apart from turning the Sikhs into a militant community, Guru Gobind Singh translated the Sanskrit and the ancient Hindu epics including Mahabharat, Ramayana and Puranas to enrich the minds of the Sikhs and instil in them bravery and heroism³⁵. Guru Gobind Singh considered Sanskrit as the repository of Hindu history and culture. He engaged a Sanskrit scholar Pandit Raghunath to teach Sanskrit to the Sikhs³⁶.

Common memories about the religious, geographical and historical past and isolation made the Sikhs and Hindus unite. This, however, should not be mistaken to mean that the Sikhs and Hindus relationships was not often marred by suspicion in India and had its impact on community relationships abroad. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the Hindu Rajas of the Shivaliks joined hands with the Mughals of Sirhind and launched regular wars against the Guru.³⁷ The Sikh-Hindu conflict towards the end of 19th century up to 1925 was over the management of the Sikh shrines, whose control had been taken over by some Sikh and Hindu priest called Mahants. The major and most recent, was in 1984 when India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi a Hindu was assassinated by her Sikh guard. In Delhi this incident sparked off a chain of massacre of the Sikhs by the Hindus³⁸.

The similarities in socio-cultural practices between the Sikhs and Hindus brought the two communities closer to each other. Though the Sikhs' code repudiated the keeping of fast for religious functions, it was practised by a fraction of the Sikhs.³⁹ Both Sikhs and Hindus celebrate the Hindu festivals of Holi, Baisakhi and Diwali, however with different meaning. Baisaikh to the Hindus was a new year day according to the Indian calendar. Whereas Sikhs celebrate it to commemorate the founding of the Khalsa Panth. Holi was spring festival associated with Krishna, to the Sikhs, Holi took the form of military manoeuvres. It involved mock battle, archery, wrestling contests and music. The identical celebration promoted communal understanding⁴⁰

Unlike the Punjabi Muslims who had no intermarriages with the Sikhs, the Punjabi Hindu families and Sikhs continued marriage liaison until the 1984 ethnic rivalry. The Punjabi Hindu families left their eldest son's hair grow like that of a Sikh *Kesh*, tied a turban and put on a Sikh emblem '*Kara*' (an iron ring) on his right wrist⁴¹. Sikhs and Hindus in Kenya inter-changeably visited each others temples. At Meru, for example, the Hindu community used the Sikh centre for their religious functions, particularly during major religious festivals⁴².

The drastic reduction of the Sikh population and that of the general Indians after the completion of the construction of Uganda railway in 1901 enhanced either groups isolation and loneliness. As a result, revived memories about their common socio-political background and contributed to the Sikh-Hindu inter-communal unity. Out of the 31,983 indentured Indians who immigrated to work on the Uganda railway, 16,312 went back to India after indenture period, 6,454 had been invalidated to India and 2,493 had died ⁴³ leaving about 6,724 Indians.

The reduction of the Sikh population was closely followed by the anti-Indian sentiments first started at the turn of the 20th century by the white settlers, who had, at that time started to settle in Kenya. They saw the Asians as a threat to their political and economic progress. And secondly by the African nationalists, whose anti-Asian sentiments, were unleashed in mid 20th century. In essence therefore the colonial period was marred by anti-Asian sentiments which forced them to get united. The fact that the Asians had a common enemy, the British colonial government which, indiscriminately instituted ordinances (see Ch.iv), drew the Sikhs and Indians together. The gradual flexing of the former rigid Indian custom of non-commensality among various castes of the Hindus⁴⁴ increased the interaction among the Hindus and Sikhs.

The social relationship between the Sikhs and Indian-Muslims in Kenya was on a low key. In 1898 Patterson records a case where there was fighting between Hindus (Sikhs were often categorised as Hindus) and Muslims.⁴⁵ Sikh-Muslim relationship had both religious and historical dimensions based in India and carried abroad. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, advocated for religious tolerance, had castigated his contemporary Muslim leaders and advised them to change their policy of religious intolerance. He warned them against falsehoods, and earning unfaithfully⁴⁶ Guru Nanak cautioned false preachers and gave the quality of a Muslim as,

.....the real Musalman appropriates truth, earns lawfully, wished well of all,
cleanses his mind of all extraneous thoughts and thus adores the Lord his
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virtuous conduct is his Kalma⁴⁷.

The atrocities, which the Mughal rulers inflicted on Sikh spiritual leaders survived. These included the murder of Guru Arjun, Sikhs' fifth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikhs' ninth Guru. Including other Sikh faithful like Bhai Mati Dass, Bhai Sati Dass, the first five beloved Sikh faithfuls, Bhai's Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Mohkam Singh, Himmat Singh and Sahib Singh, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh⁴⁸. The names and deeds of the Martyrs are remembered in the Sikhs *ardas* (supplications). They are un-detachable part of their daily prayer. These prayers, in India and Kenya, promoted both heroism and hatred, particularly during commemoration of those Sikh ancestors who bore the agony of death because of their truthful living, noble deeds, selfless service, deep spiritual devotion, brave sacrifice and strong determination to serve humanity. Such celebrations, provoked the Sikhs to realise that they were saint soldiers, who were to live and die for the cause of upholding the right to live with dignity⁴⁹.

The Muslims used torture in carrying out the murder. Guru Arjuns' torture in 1606, involved sitting on a cauldron of boiling water, burning sand was poured on his naked body and his weakened and blistered body was immersed in cold water of river Ravi⁵⁰. Guru, Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru was killed by Mughal leader Aurangzeb. His body was cut into four pieces and hanged at four gates of the fort of Delhi.⁵¹ The sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the elder two were killed by Muslims at the battle of Chamkaur, while, the younger two of ages, two and six were buried in the brick wall⁵². Banda Singh's execution was brutal. The executioners hacked his (Banda Singh's son) son into pieces, dragged out his quivering heart, and thrust it into the father's mouth. Banda Singh was deprived off his eyes, hands and feet. His flesh was torn with red-hot pincers before his head was chopped off.⁵³

The fragile communal relationships between the Sikhs and Muslims came handy to the British policy of Divide and Rule that was applied in India and in Kenya. In India, for

encouraged and recruited into the British-Indian army and allowed to retain Sikh symbols. During the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the Sikhs fought on the side of British against the Muslims and the Hindus⁵⁴. After the Mutiny, the number of the Sikhs in the Indian army was increased, whereas Muslims and Hindus were suspected. A provision was made which allowed Sikh soldiers to have their five external symbols.⁵⁵ A Sikh in the Indian army, as the British Kenyan force was expected to maintain his separate identity.

It was both the religious zeal and the British divide and rule policy that encouraged Muslims and Sikhs to demand for a separate representation in the Indian legislative council in the late 19th and early 20th Century (see Ch.iv). The Muslims' demand for a separate, communal seat for their representation forced the Sikhs to demand the same both in India and Kenya. Hence, the political competition between the Muslims and Sikhs started in India had an impact in Kenya, on the political and social plane. The Sikhs in Kenya became closer to the Hindu organisation both in political and social fields. Consequently, the communal political speeches in India, particularly by Muslim leaders like M.A Jinnah in the 1930's and 1940's hindered the prospects of inter-communal harmony⁵⁶.

The inter-communal animosity among the Indian religious communities remained unsolved up to and after India's independence in 1947. This, not only concretised the inter-communal hostility but also led to the break up of Indian sub continent along religious lines. The communal social-cum-political animosity of India was reflected in Kenya. The Sikhs and Hindus on one side and Indian Muslims on the other at Nairobi, near Khoja Mosque wielded hockey sticks and stones against each other on the eve of India's independence⁵⁷.

Meanwhile, the inter-communal relationship between the Sikhs and the Hindus in Kenya is functional. The Sikhs are members of the Hindu council of Kenya (HCK).⁵⁸ The Hindu Council of Kenya is a body uniting all people whose religion originated in India for example the Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains. However Muslims are not represented. The leadership is held on a rotational basis, involving the member communities. T.S Nandhra, a

Sikh held the chairmanship of HCK between 1975 and 1978 followed by a Hindu. For celebrations the HCK, co-ordinates activities of the member organisations. It takes keen interest in the celebration of Diwali, Holi, including Sikhs' celebration of the inauguration of Guru Granth Sahib as Guru and Parkash Utsav⁵⁹. More recently, the Sikhs championing inter-communal unity thanked their Hindu brothers, of the Hindu Council of Kenya during the 392nd Ustav of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. At national level, the HCK and Sikhs collaborate in national inter-communal projects, financing of self help projects, helping the disadvantaged people in the country, promotion of education, medical camps, welfare projects, business and professional advice through services and workshops⁶⁰. The HCK lobbies for the acquisition of visas, settlement licenses for its member groups from the government⁶¹. At times where the decision involves the entire Hindu religious groups, the decision is usually made by HCK. When Kenya government made religious education a compulsory subject in primary schools, the Sikhs and Hindus worked together in designing the syllabus for Hindu religious education⁶². Sikhism was also classified as Hindu religious education.

The Sikhs, as members of the wider HCK, endeavour for inter-communal harmony by either dissociating and condemning sectarian violence unleashed by the Sikh extremist anywhere in the world.⁶³ Nandhra T.S. chairman of HCK from 1975 and 1978, promoted inter-communal identity. Besides Sikhism, Nandhra joined Bhartiya Sevak Sang⁶⁴ a Hindu sect since 1948 and has remained a member. Other bodies on which Nandhra T.S has served include, on trans-communal educational and health institutions by being a member on the board of governors of Eastleigh Secondary School, Highway Secondary School, Ngara Girls School, Ainsworth Primary School and Pangani Girls where he had served for thirteen years. He was appointed to the Nairobi Medical board, by the government where he served as a chairman of the finance committee. The other health institutions where he served include Social Service League (M.P. Shah hospital) the Aga Khan Hospital. He was also involved in

various trans-communal cultural and sports institutions, as chairman of Bharatiya Co-operative Society and Arya Samaj institution. He is life member of Santam Dham Society, Geeta society and also the Patron of Simba Union of Nairobi and that of Eldoret, suprisingly including Sir Ali Muslim Club⁶⁵.

Scholars have argued that the identification of the Sikhs with the HCK downplays Sikhs' harmonising role, as was institutionalised by the founder Gurus. In effect they assert that Sikhs union with Hindu Council of Kenya overshadowed their Sikh identity as a separate religion⁶⁶. However, this has to be examined on the premise of Sikhs' tolerance of other religions. The fact that the Sikhs like the Hindus were in the foreign country as an immigrant minority, were forced to seek inter-communal identity.⁶⁷ Similarly, despite, their membership of the HCK, all Sikhs retained their outward symbols as was propounded by Guru Gobind Singh. In other words, the Sikhs were members of HCK as Sikhs not Hindus.

The Sikh-Hindu identity, was similarly, facilitated and maintained by intermarriages between certain smaller sections of the Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus. This depicted a greater social association between the two, going above the unity among the Sikhs with regard to marriage liaison. The Hindu merchant class Malhotra Bauri intermarry with the Sikhs of the same caste. This is unlike to the Sikhs, the Ramgarhia and Jat Sikhs. Despite the common religious affiliation, the two do not traditionally inter marry. This was where caste among the Sikhs overrode religious tenets. As earlier stated the traditional grading of Indian society, based on Hindu caste, puts the Ramgarhia Sikhs, below the jat (soldier farmer). In Kenya the Ramgarhias have largely remained endogamous. The Anthropologist A. Bharati described Ramgarhias endogamy as one of default because none of the Punjab groups considered them as eligible partners for marital liaisons. Sikhs however agree that with the changing trend it is possible to get a Jat Sikh married to a Ramgarhia or the latter married to the former⁶⁸.

Thus the efforts of the Sikhs to rid themselves of rituals, and caste, in accordance with the tenets of Sikhism failed. This was reflected in their inter relationships abroad. In

India, after the demise of the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, the persecution that followed Sikhs and the infiltration into Sikhism of Brahmnical Hindu faiths contributed to the emergency of revival movement among the (Sikhs)⁶⁹ in the 18th and 19th centuries. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839) in the Punjab created a powerful Sikh State of political glory, but Maharaja himself indulged in greed, treachery and intrigues which, had been the prevalent political practices. Ten years after his death, the British annexed the Sikh Empire in 1849, and gradually the Sikhs' holy shrines went to the priestly Hindus and Sikhs called Mahants. Along side was the trickling back of many rejected Brahmnical practices into Sikhism. The scenario brought about revival movements among the Sikhs as represented in Kenya by the Namdharis.

In the 19th century Sikhism in India, was similarly invaded by Christianity. There were cases of Sikhs' conversion to Christianity. The major blow to the Sikhs was the conversion of a young Maharaja Dalip Singh to Christianity⁷⁰. He was granted pension and left India for England, where he died on October, 22, 1893.

The Namdhari movement was one of the Sikh reform movements founded by Balak Singh (1799-1862). The Namdharis are different from the orthodox Sikhs (Those who believe in the ten human Gurus and the *Granth Sahib*-Sikhs' holy book as the final Guru). Namdharis unlike the orthodox Sikhs do not uphold the view that Guru Gobind Singh was last human Guru, and that he bestowed or inspired the *Granth Sahib* with the power of Guru. They similarly refute the view that Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708 and instead they believe that Guru Gobind Singh disappeared from the assassins in 1708 and lived in seclusion up to the age of 146 years and died in 1812. They also believe that, Guru Gobind Singh chose one of his disciples, Balak Singh, as his successor, before his death.

The Namdhari repudiate anti-feminism practices like *Sati* (the killing of wife on her husband's pyre) *Purdah* (female seclusion) and early marriage. The founder of Namdharis advocated for a simple and inexpensive dowry-less marriage⁷¹. In Kenya the Namdharis are

easily recognised by their white turban tied horizontally across the forehead.

Most of the Namdharis, however, did not come to Kenya at the end of 19th century. These was partly because, the Namdharis were entirely opposed to everything associated with the British rule, since the British establishment in India, even after they annexed Punjab in 1849. The anti-colonialists Namdharis followed passive and active resistance, perfected later by nationalists including Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi joined Indian politics in 1915.⁷² In their implementation of the non co-operation movement, the Namdharis opposed anything that was associated with the British including their goods, services and schools. They, for example travelled on foot or horse-back, used traditional "*dak*" instead of British postal system and detested western education. This made them remain illiterate in India. They had 'Panchayat' (the traditional committees) for legal recourse and not the British Colonial Courts.⁷³

The Namdharis came into direct conflict with the British after 1870, following what could be described as religious conflict between Muslims and Sikhs. The Namdharis were not only mistrusted by the British but also suspected of disloyal activities with intentions of reviving Sikh rule. The situation came out of hand in January 1872, when a group of Namdharis bounced on Maland and Malekorta for arms.⁷⁴ This incident was occasioned by a Namdhari displeased by the Muslim over-working the oxen (which the Namdharis considered as holy), intervened to rescue it. A quarrel which took the tone of religious animosity between the Sikhs and Muslims ensued when the matter was reported to the police. At the station the officer on duty was a Muslim. He, according to the Namdharis, became biased in his judgement and beat up the Namdhari. After the news spread, among the Namdharis, they retaliated by attacking the police station⁷⁵. The response of the Colonial government to the Namdharis reflected the mistrust they had for them. Seven Namdharis were killed on the spot of attack. The then deputy commissioner of Ludhiana Mr. L. Cowan

had interpreted the Namdharis move as not religious animosity between the two groups but

another attempt by the Sikhs to begin rebellion. Consequently he ordered the killing of forty-nine Kukas in January 1872. A day later on, January 18th, 1872, the commissioner of Ambala, Douglas Fosyther ordered the killing of sixteen Namdharis. In total 65 Namdharis were executed.⁷⁶ The British colonial government partly to ease tension and partly to clear their image in the public eyes, removed the two officers from the government positions.⁷⁷ However, the fact that the two British officers had accomplished their roles could not be ruled out, as this was in line with the British policy of Divide and Rule tactics. As a result the leader of the Namdhari, Satguru Ram Singh and twelve of his followers were exiled in Burma.⁷⁸ While there, the Namdhari leader Ram Singh died on November 29, 1884. Meanwhile Bhaini, the headquarters of the Namdharis, remained under British surveillance until Dec. 10, 1920.⁷⁹

This in part explains why the Namdharis came in Kenya late unlike the orthodox Sikhs. The first Namdharis came in Kenya in early 1920's. Their social unity with the Orthodox Sikhs (. Sikhs who believe in the ten Gurus and the Granth Sahib as the last Guru) was fluid. This was basically because of doctrinal differences. The Namdharis have their own religious centre at Nairobi it is in Parklands.

Apart from the Namdhari's Sikh reform movements, which started in mid 19th, Century there was the formidable Sri Guru Singh Sabha. It was started in India in 1873 and later imported to Kenya by the first indentured labour in 1890's. These involved clerks, technicians and members of the police force. They established their first Gurudwara at Mombasa in 1893 and later a tent at Nairobi in 1899. In 1901 Sardar Kishen Singh, watch maker Bishen Singh, Kapoor Singh, Kesar Singh and the Sikh community built a Gurudwara named 'Gurudwara police' on race course Road⁸⁰. Khalsa boys and girls both primary and secondary now occupy the spot. The setting up of a permanent Gurudwara at Nairobi by the Sri Guru Singh Sabha started in 1909. The foundation stone was laid by Sardar Kishan Singh, and was completed and opened three years later by a watchmaker, Sardar Bishen Singh Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Singh. The school was added to the Sikh centre in 1934. Following the increase of Sikh population in Kenya and at Nairobi in particular made the Sikhs approach the colonial government in 1956 for more space to construct a Gurudwara. The land was granted to them on January 16, 1959 and the present magnificent Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurudwara foundation was laid by Mohan Singh, Sandokh Singh, Jaswant Singh and Labh Singh. After, about four years of construction work, the Gurudwara was completed and opened by Inder Singh Gill in 1963⁸¹.

In Kenya, as was the case in India, Sri Guru Singh Sabha did not accomplish, the objective of revitalising Sikhism to its initial stature. In Kenya, the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, apart from the construction of Sikh Gurudwara in a cross section of East Africa, (referred to, later in the chapter) degenerated into what could be mistaken for a Sikh sect. However the difference between the Ramgarhia and Sri Guru Singh Sabha was not doctrinal but cultural⁸². It thus did not warrant the difference between them being referred to as sect. The Ramgarhia Sikhs who came to East Africa Protectorate were unhappy with the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, because it was dominated by the educated Jat Sikhs⁸³. They were well connected in both Kenya (the East Africa Protectorate) and in India under British colonial government. The Ramgarhias, similarly, complained of being looked down upon by the Jat Sikhs. Consequently they started to distance themselves from the Sri Guru Singh Sabha and by 1930 the Ramgharia Sikhs established East Africa Ramgarhia Sabha⁸⁴. At Mombasa, Sikhs' intra-communal relationship (between Ramgarhia and Sri Guru Singh Sabha) was not distinctly manifest. This was partly because not many Sikhs stayed at Mombasa after embarkation from India. Similarly the separatist tendencies among the Indians, be it among Muslims and Hindus, or Sikhs were evidently blunted at Mombasa a foreign land.

Traditionally, the Ramgarhia Sikhs emerged after the death of the last human Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh. The Gurus death was later followed by the break up of the Khalsa Panth, established on the Baisakhi in April 13, 1699. These led to the emergence of twelve

misals. The Ramgarhia misal was, led by Sardar, Jesse Singh from a carpenter family. The name Ramgarhia was derived from Ram-Garh fort of Amritsar. Sardar Jesse Singh and his troops seized Ram-Garh fort from the Mughals in 1758⁸⁵. Most Ramgarhia were imported to work on the Uganda railway as artisans and policemen, among other places. Uganda railway workers were recruited from Amritsar, the homeland of Sikhism.

The formation of Ramgarhia Sabha at Nairobi was later followed by the establishment of Ramgarhia halls and temples⁸⁶, different from those of Sri Guru Singh Sabha. The social disintegration of the intra Sikhs' unity in Kenya, into Ramgarhia, Singh Sabha and Namdharis had its origin on the caste traditions in India, which sustained a doctrinal difference among them. In India, the Ramgarhia were universally called Kamins or manual workers⁸⁷. They were the equivalent of the Shudra of the Hindu Varna system. The Ramgarhia Sikhs, in traditional Indian society, were subjected to hardship and humiliations. They were, severely punished over trivialities and at times were not supposed to enter certain shrines of the '*Pirs*' holy, including attendance of certain religious functions⁸⁸. The Ramgarhia Sikhs rarely attended certain festivals for fear that the '*Jats*' would be there. This suspicion hindered mutual trust between the Jats and Ramgarhias. This was despite the changes in social economic life, which had offered new avenues for status and career dynamism.⁸⁹

At Nairobi, the Ramgarhia Sikhs built their first temple at Railway Landhies Nairobi. The Sri Gurudwara Ramgarhia railway was, built by Sikh employees of the Kenya railway in 1903⁹⁰. The land on Factory Street, for the Gurdawara, was allocated to them freely by Railway authorities in 1960. The construction of Landhies Gurudwara, was done on '*Kar Seva*' (voluntary service). Initially the Gurudwara consisted of a single hall, roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Later the Centre was expanded to include a kitchen and residential facilities. The increase of population among the Ramgarhia Sikhs, and general need for expansion, obliged them to build another Gurudwara Ramgarhia Railway on the land, then

freely allocated to them for social development. The Gurudwara was inaugurated in December 1971, by Puran Singh and construction work was started in May 1972⁹¹. The foundation breaking ceremony was presided over by Ujagar Singh and Mohan Singh. Three years later Tara Singh Channa and Avtar Singh Channa officially opened the Gurudwara South C, on March, 23, 1975. The Ramgarhia Sikh Centre South 'C' consists of kitchen, dining shelter, washing area, general stores, hall and residential flat for Granthis, four rest rooms, library, classroom and office. The foundation stone of Yatta road Ramgarhia hall was laid in 1933 by Sardar Hem Singh Sehmi⁹². This was under East Africa Ramgarhia board. Like other Gurudwaras, the eventual construction was carried out on the basis of 'Kar Seva' and fund raising: After four years, the Sikh centre was completed in March 1937, and was officially opened by Kehar Singh Kelsi. It has a prayer hall with a balcony, kitchen, residential rooms, dining hall and the guest wing.

In 1946, the Ramgarhia Sikhs acquired a plot where they built Ramgarhia mansion, consisting of three, storey with shops, dispensary, dental clinic and flats⁹³. In mid 1960 a social hall was added to the Ramgarhia mansion. The present headquarters of East Africa Ramgarhia board, Ramgarhia Sikh temple Pangani, Nairobi was inaugurated by Sardar Hardial Singh Bhachu in march 1970. The foundation stone was, laid nine months later, by Tara Singh, Chaana and Avtar Singh Chana⁹⁴. The construction was completed within two years and was officially opened by Sardar Gurdial Singh Sian on April 30th, 1972. The Ramgarhia Sikh Centre Pangani has two social halls, Dasmesh hall, on ground floor, Congregation hall (Nanak Darbar) on first floor. The building also has offices and residential flats for Granthis.

The Ramgarhia Sikhs in Kenya built their distinct institutions under their regional organisation the East Africa Ramgarhia⁹⁵. The East Africa Ramgarhia board was established to enhance Ramgarhia solidarity in East Africa. As in India, the Ramgarhia Sikhs named their institutions either under the name Ramgarhia or with a Suffix Kamgarhia, for example, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary, NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

Ramgarhia Sikh hospital, East Africa Ramgarhia dispensary, Ramgarhia Sikh dispensary. Meanwhile the Ramgarhia institutions compared to those of Sri Guru Singh Sabha, were of recent establishment. Until the 1930's the Ramgarhia Sikhs had limited funds and initially the Sikhs shared religious centres until when friction amongst them emerged. At Eldoret, Kitale, Kisumu including Nairobi the Ramgarhia and Singh Sabha have separate Gurudwaras. In Urban centres where Sikh population was small, intra-communal identity between the Singh Sabha and Ramgarhia was not conspicuously displayed by construction of separate Gurudwaras. What is particularly notable is the absence of any visible hostility among the Sikh castes.

Castes of Sikh Migrant in Kenya⁹⁶

Caste	Percentage
Ramgarhia	70
Jats	20
Kashtryas and Aroras	4
Kukas	3
Shimbas	2
Harijans	1

The existence of caste distinctions among the Sikhs in Kenya as in India, however subtle, is a negation of the Sikhs' order of humanity as was propounded by the Sikh founder Gurus.

Following the formation of Ramgarhia Sabha as a distinct body from Sri Guru Singh Sabha, for many years, the Sikhs in Kenya remained without a unifying social umbrella organisation until the formation of the Sikh Council of Kenya in 1974. The Sikh Council of Kenya, whose pioneer officials included T.S. Dogra, as the chairman and Bhambra as the secretary, did not make much head ways in socially uniting the Sikhs. They, however, made efforts to sponsor Sikh programmes, particularly annual festivals. At Nairobi, not all the Gurudwara committees rallied behind the Sikh Council of Kenya⁹⁷. The Namdharis were not members of the council because of the doctrinal differences. The officials of the council, as was gathered, were inactive, they ran the organisation as a private and personal body. They

lacked determination and will to spend their money and time⁹⁸ Howard@Gmail.com on the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Library

need for an umbrella organisation among the Sikhs

In 1983, a Joint Gurudwara Committee was formed consisting of the Sikh Gurudwaras at Nairobi and Makindu Gurudwara. It was established to co-ordinate all activities of Sikh temples at Nairobi. Two years after its formation, there emerged another Sikh umbrella organisation, the Sikh Supreme Council of Kenya substituting Sikh Council of Kenya.¹⁰⁰ Though the Sikh Supreme Council of Kenya was founded in 1985, it was given legal recognition a year later. The first executive of the Sikh Supreme Council of Kenya consisted of T.S. Nandhra, the chairman, three vice chairmen, D.S. Bhangal D.S. Bhangu and H.S. Sembi. The secretary was H.S. Mutharu. The Treasurer and assistant treasurer, were G.S. Kelly and Para Singh respectively. The public relations officer was, Avtar Singh Sehmi.¹⁰⁰ The composition of the council, included the Sikh Student Federation (discussed later in this chapter), the joint Gurudwara committee, the Namdharis who, however, withdrew because of doctrinal differences. Thus they left the Sikh Supreme Council as yet another sectorial representative body of the Sikhs in Kenya.

The underlying aim of Sikh umbrella organisation, starting with the Singh Sabha, Ramgarhia Sabha, Sikh council of Kenya including Sikh Supreme Council, was to facilitate Sikhs' identity and solidarity. The Sikh Supreme Council of Kenya for example, emphasises propagation of Sikh religion, Punjabi language, exchange of ideas within Sikh community. It aids in social and welfare matters by harnessing the community's resources for its development. The organisation became a forum, where Sikh Gurudwara committees including member organisations resolved their social, welfare, educational and health issues. It ensured the implementation of common religious practices and observation of *Rahit Maryada* (Sikhs' code of conduct). At national level, the Sikh Supreme Council makes representations to the government and statutory bodies on matters affecting the Sikhs in Kenya. It similarly ensured the integration and observation of the Sikhs' code of conduct by

Sikh tenets were discouraged. These include drinking and smoking. To ensure efficiency in its operation and implementation, the Sikh Supreme Council of (Kenya) has divided functions into various sub-committees which, deal with various aspects within the community, for example, the education sub-committee caters for educational affairs of the Sikhs. Gurmat Parchar deals with propagation of religion and Punjabi language, medical sub-committee, deals with health, social and welfare, sports sub-committee organises sports for the Sikhs, Hatti sub-committee, stocks supplies like, Malmal and Kanghas, (hair fixers), items related to cremation, weddings and communal celebration. The sub-committees however are not rigid instead change according to the needs of the Council. Overall, the Sikh Supreme Council endeavours to integrate Sikhs into a united Sikh body.

Following the footsteps of their co-religionists in India, Sikhs in Kenya felt need for a youth organisation. The youth movements characterised the religious organisations in mid 19th century. It was, started in Britain, by George William (1821-1905). He established a club for improvement of the spiritual life of the youths in drapery and other trades. The idea of youth organisation spread from U.K and reached Australia and North America in the 1850's. On the lines of the YMCA, the Khalsa Young Mens Association¹⁰¹ was formed.

Sikhs in Kenya, conscious of the fact that the youth were more prone to temptation, particularly disbelief in the external symbols of Sikhism, they welcomed the idea of Youth organisation to keep the youths firmly within their religion. Though the Sikh Youth Organisation in Kenya was patterned on the Sikh Youth organisation in India, it remained an independent organisation from that in India.

The Sikh Youths in Kenya established their organisation in 1955 called 'Sikh Student Federation'. The Sikh Student Federation was supposedly independent¹⁰² of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha. The irony however, lay in the fact that, its offices were and still are in the Sri Guru Singh Sabha premises at Racecourse Road. Similarly, despite the theoretical independence its members are aware of their parents' religious affiliations as either

belonging to the Ramgarhia or Sri Guru Singh Sabha. Thus in theory, the Sikh Student Federation is independent, however, in practice the circumstances under which it operated goes against the very thesis of its independence.

Like the Sikh Supreme Council, the Sikh Student Federation was established to foster Sikhism and Sikh identity among the Sikhs. This was enshrined in the organisations' objectives. According to its objectives Sikh Student Federation was established to promote the spirit of Sikh brotherhood amongst the youths, to conduct activities improving their educational, physical, moral, social, religious and cultural conditions. The constitution emphasises, the use of Punjabi language, among Sikh youths, so that it enables them read the Guru Granth Sahib. It is to foster and promote unity among various sections and organisations of the Sikhs in East Africa, financing activities necessary to the welfare of the Sikh students in particular and the Sikh community in general¹⁰³. The inter-communal and inter-regional character of the Sikh Student Federation was, overshadowed by limiting membership of the organisation to the Sikhs only. Thus, Sikh Student Federation has remained a social cultural body for integrating Sikh youths into Sikhism and enhancing Sikh communal identity. The organisation's objectives were to train Sikh youths read Punjabi. Visit their temple and take an interest in the affairs of their community. Respect parents, sacrifice their personal interests for the sake of the community and Sikh religion and get married within the Sikh community, according to the wishes of the parents. The youths were expected to Keep external symbols of Sikhism¹⁰⁴. Thus, the Sikh elders' interest was to ensure a distinct Sikh identity, without significant inter-communal liaison.

With passage of time and of generations, the codes and morals of Sikhism among the youths tended to fade. Sikhi youths known as '*Petit* Sikhs' born in Sikh family but not observing Sikhism were born. This is evident in the annual magazine of the Sikh student federation 'The Prakash', where the Sikh youths are advised to observe Sikhism as was professed by the Gurus, particularly the keeping of the outward symbols. In the Magazine

there is repeated warning to the Sikh youths against deviating from Sikhism. Thus manifesting fear that looms large to the youths following the changing times. In 1962 magazine of the Sikh Student Federation, the students were warned against cutting their beard:

....those young people who endeavour, look neater and tidier by cutting it (beards) are disobeying....Indeed they are indirectly saying, "Oh God Almighty, what a terrible mistake you have committed by growing the beard on my face"¹⁰⁵.

Comparatively many youths shave and this is prevalent among the Sikhs in Kenya than in India¹⁰⁶. The question of being cleaner and neater has overtaken religious requirement of keeping the beards and the hair-long.

Though intoxicants are forbidden, yet both in Kenya and in India, it is a common practice among the Sikhs to consume alcohol, thus getting a discrepancy between what is preached and performed. In India and Kenya 40% Sikhs are estimated to take alcohol but not many smoke¹⁰⁷. Sikhs who visit the Pubs frequently interact with Africans. Their outgoing attitude made them socially classified differently by Africans who describe them as *Kalasinghas*.

Interestingly Sikhism, is the only oriental religion both in India and in Kenya that propounds equal status for men and women¹⁰⁸. The Sikh Gurus took practical measures for the socio-religious rehabilitation of women. They detested female infanticide. In the Sikh's code of conduct *Rahit Maryada*, it is ordained that those who practice female infanticide be ostracised. *Sati* self-immolation by the widow on the funeral pyre of her husband was discouraged among the Sikhs¹⁰⁹. Similarly, *Purdah* (Veil covering the face of women while in public) was equally discouraged. In Sikhism remarriage of widows is allowed. Women according to the Sikhs may have the same divine spark as men and a woman is allowed to lead the congregation, recite scripture and sing hymns. She can also be baptised by the

sword, thus recognising her equality with men for defending the Sikh community. The tenth

Guru, termed initiated Sikh women 'Kaur' (princess) just as men were called 'Singhs' (lions).

In practice, however, equality was not observed and the position of Sikh women to men was not noticeable. Sikhs in Kenya as India have been patriarchal and a woman occupies a secondary place, without right of inheritance from her parents. However, the Sikh women did not suffer from double oppression as a woman, and as a member of the oppressed class. The *manus mriti* underscores the divine sanction for the discrimination of women. The Gurus made, the position of women clear;

It is with a woman that we are conceived, It is from her that we are born. It is to her that we are engaged and then married, It is she who keeps the race going. It is she who becomes our life long friend. It is another woman who replaces a departed wife. It is with a woman that we develop our social ties, why then belittle her from whom kings and all men are born¹¹⁰.

The Sikh women in Kenya, established their own social organisation titled, 'Sikh Women Society' in 1974 as a social welfare body. It stresses the integration of Sikh tenets and Sikh culture. It is a forum, where the Sikh women take part in inter and intra-communal development projects, and voice their views. The society emphasises the teaching of Punjabi to the Sikh youths as a means of instilling Sikh culture. As a welfare organisation, the society endeavours to eliminate use of intoxicants and diseases amongst the Sikh.

On a wider plane, the Sikh Women Society, takes part in the assistance of the less fortunate regardless of religious, racial or creed. This is in line with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus who treated humanity as one, the spiritual manifestations of the absolute God. Sikh women give donations in form of food and material. Material assistance from Sikh Women Society included wheel chairs for the disabled. More recently, in 1989, Sikh Women Society donated glass-ware, wheel chairs to the spinal patients, at Muthithi Road Home for the aged, at the children's homes at Dagoretti and Salvation Army children's home at Nairobi. In 1985, the Sikh Women Society, were hostess to 1500 women, who took part in the non-governmental women world conference. The luncheon was served at Ramgarhia Sikh Centre Pangani.¹¹¹

In 1990, the Sikh Women Society led by its chairperson Rattan K Channa, Joginder K. Schmi, vice chairperson and Secretary Kulfinder K. Burdi, initiated and completed various projects. In that year the society donated food and soft drinks to St. Nicholas Family Life Centre, Thika school for the blind, to Muthithi Road Home for the aged and to the National spinal injury hospital. The major contribution for that year was the renovation of Mji wa Huruma. The society used about Kshs.100,000¹¹². Other donations to the same home included television set, sewing machine and warm clothing. Towards the end of that year, Nov. 25, at Guru Nanak Ramgarhia Sikh Hospital, Sikh women organised a health camp, where people donated blood. In all 53 pints of blood was donated. 92 people underwent diabetic, 69 eye and 54 ENT check-up.

The inter-communal projects undertaken by Sikh women went above the stereotype views based on prejudice. The projects show the Sikhs as people with inter-communal interaction in Kenya. The inter-communal projects fulfil their religious tenet of helping the needy and the oppressed as was enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib. The weakness however lay in the fact that, most of the projects undertaken by the Sikhs were limited either to major cities particularly Nairobi and their impact were not visible in larger parts of Kenya despite their humanistic value.

As a community however, the Sikhs initiated activities, which became instrumental in the sustenance of their culture and religion. In appearance Sikhs kept the five K's (five external symbols), for a man, the head remains covered by the turban, removed at the time one went to bed. Like men, the Sikh women cover their heads at the place of worship. All Sikhs wash their feet before they enter the Gurudwara (temple). This practice is often not observed when the congregation is held in the tent or at private halls. At the end of worship, either at a private hall or in the Gurudwara *Karrah Parshad* (holy food) is served to all the people present. *Karrah Parshad* is usually followed by '*langar*' communal food. The communal inter-dining promoted the concept of humanity. People of different background

dine together, in contravention of Hindu caste. *Langar* is popular among the Sikhs. A small number of Africans mostly servants at the Gurudwara partake in the Langar. All the Sikh temples have a flag or *Nishan Sahib*. The flag is fixed on a tall pole so that it is visible from a distance. It is usually triangular at the top, with two shovels, with a broad circle *Chakar* wheel and a broad double edged knife stitched on it. The Sikh flag pole is usually covered with saffron cloth which is often changed periodically. The Sikhs' flag is meant to indicate the location of the Gurudwara, but some Sikh members bow before it in adoration¹¹³.

The institution of marriage promoted the Sikhs' identity whose impact is felt in their social behaviour. The fact that Sikh elders arrange marriage ensures that only socially accepted partners are selected for marriage. The Sikh tenets, however, does not give room for restrictions of marriage partners. The Sikh practice of arranged marriage is both a hindrance to interracial marriage and to Sikhs' tenets. It in effect helped to keep Sikhs distinct. The bride and the groom among the Sikhs are enjoined to seek the union of their soul into one. Unlike Hindu who consult the astrologers to determine the suitability and fix up the time, the Sikhs supplicatory prayer (*ardas*) is performed by mutual agreement without resorting to astronomical data. This conforms to the Sikhs' disregard of rituals. Granthi or any person who can recite the Guru Granth Sahib, and a party of religious singers can perform the Sikhs' wedding. During wedding the bride and groom sit before the Granth Sahib. The prayer is made to invoke Gods blessings. The leader of the ceremony gives advice to the couple. Thereafter the bride's father places the scarf of the groom in the hands of the bride. This is followed by the central part of the Sikhs marriage practice singing of the *lavan*. When each is sung the bride groom, followed by the bride go round the Guru Granth Sahib. The marriage ceremony ends with the singing of Anand, followed by Slokas, first is the admonishment to lead a normal life, forgoing asceticism, to be truthful, kind, humble and resilient. Although Sikhs' wedding festival appears to have been an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim characteristics, over time, the Sikh wedding ceremony evolved into a unique class of its

own¹¹⁴ detached from either Hindu, Christian nor Islam. Sikh wedding practices is limited among the Sikhs hence it has had no impact on wider Kenyan society like Christianity or Islam.

Sikhism, compared to Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam is the most recent faith. It emerged from the founders' reflections on Hinduism and Islam and their impact to the society. Consequently Sikhism appeared closer to the two main system faiths. However it evolved into a distinct faith, it modified them and established its own characteristics.¹¹⁵

Other Sikh practices which left them united include, continuous recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib from the beginning to the end. The process that takes 48 hours (called the *Akhand Paath*). Like the Hindu, the Sikhs dead body is cremated. This is diversion from the founders' demonstration that the dead body could either be buried or cremated depending on ones original faith before joining Sikhism. In Kenya, the Sikhs and Hindus have a common crematorium. This gives the two communities a common identity. The cremation of the dead, among the Sikhs entails ardas for a dead Sikh, performed by a Granthi or some other faithful. The next of kin goes round the body with ignited stick. The pyre is lit at the head but there is no (*Kapal Kirya*) puncture of the head. The crowd disperses with a recitation of *Sohla* (a prayer recited by Sikhs before they surrender to bed). The remains of the Sikh like those of the Hindu are collected and dumped into a nearby stream or canal.

Sikhism emphasises purity among its followers. It is a taboo for a Sikh to cut his or her hair, eat meat slaughtered in the Muslim way, or commit adultery. In case, a Sikh commits any of the sin, has to take *amrit* (baptism), and repent not to repeat the sin. Anti-Sikh practices include clubbing in the Gurudwara, or in the presence of holy book, sitting on bench, or sitting in the Gurudwara and singing other songs other than given in the Guru Granth Sahib. In India there were no chairs at the *langar*, however in Kenya there were benches.

Apart from the Namdharis, the Orthodox Sikhs (Sikhs who believe in the ten Gurus

and the Guru Granth Sahib as the final Guru) observe all festivities associated with Sikhism. The birthday of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, the martyr of Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the installation of the Sikhs holy book, Granth Sahib' as Guru Gadi, Guru Granthji, the Baisakhi, the day Guru Gobind Singh initiated the Sikhs into 'pure brotherhood, the *Khalsa Panth*¹¹⁶, including *Holi* started by Guru Gobind Singh. It is primarily a sports day and a day to meet friends, 'Diwali' to the Sikhs is the commemoration of the release of Guru Hargobind from the Gwalior Fort. Though the Hindus celebrate Holi, Baisakhi and even Diwali, this is done for different reasons by the Sikhs. In Kenya these festivals are celebrated by large gatherings and they help the Sikhs and Hindus to come closer.

Sikhs' insistence on their purity through religious practices created boundaries against integration. As a result Sikhs interaction with the wider Kenyan society, particularly with larger African has been tardy.

2.2 The Influence Of Racism In Colonial Kenya And Its Impact To The Sikhs Social Role And Race Relations

The social identity of the Sikhs and of the Indian against the white settler and the colonial government was manifest in the white settlers and colonial government's legislation of racial laws. Even then it did not lead to (except for Makhan Singh) emergence of Sikhs' racial animosity against the white authority as the Hindus eventually turned out to be. The propagation of stereotypes and prejudices about the immigrants from the Indian sub-continent amongst whom were Sikhs started as early as 1900. Charles Elliot the, then colonial commissioner in Kenya in 1900-1904 represented the colonial government's racist policies. In his administration he did not differentiate amongst the people from the Indian sub-continent as, Sikhs, Hindus or Muslims. The administration regarded Indians as perpetrators of crime¹¹⁷ and unhygiene.¹¹⁸

Bransley William, also a white, in 1907 argued like Charles Elliot. He recommended residential and commercial segregation in areas inhabited by Indians, including the Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, because of sanitation.

Simpson, a white and Professor of tropical medicine, commissioned to report on health and plague in East Africa released a racist draft report of public health bill in 1913. The report turned out to be a revival of Bransely William and Charles Elliot racial stand, he recommended residential and commercial segregation between the Indians and Whites. Simpson argued that segregation and demolition of Indian bazaar was necessary if in sanitation from Indian community was to be curbed¹¹⁹. He tightened the premise of racial hatred and enhanced Sikh/Indian social solidarity. The ambiguity of Simpson was explicit in 1915. At a Municipal meeting on January 28, 1915, under the chairmanship of T.A. Wood and attended by Allen Tenna Hill Beaton Dundas, Tanner Tarton, Kennedy Notley and the town clerk. Turn Hill questioned Simpson's proposal which he understood, to mean that, though he was opposed to Asians having residential and commercial activities on the same plot, he appeared to suggest that Ngara area (dominantly Indian area) could combine residential and commercial centre¹²⁰.

Simpson's report unifying the Sikhs and other Indians as a race, received support from the Land officer, Barton Wright, who recommended residential and commercial segregation between Whites and Indians. It was not a Sikh but an all Indians' representative, A.M. Jeevanjee, who protested against the segregation report. This reflected Sikhs subtle response to colonial racial pressure as well as their politics of behind scenes and the success of colonial policies in socially uniting Sikhs to other Indian communities. Meanwhile Barton Wright the land officer designed a plan for racial segregation¹²¹. On November 29, 1920 Simpson's report was revised by the acting principal medical officer Dr. J.L. Gilks and put to the Legislative Council. Later the report was referred to select committee, consisting of three elected members and three officials and one nominated Indian¹²². When the select committee

considered the report they demanded deletion of a clause which provided for racial segregation. Members of the committee argued that, the segregation policy was not purely sanitary but political¹²³. The report was presented on January 18, 1921.

Similarly the European economic commission of 1917 evoked racism against the Sikhs as it was to other Indians and this united the Sikhs to other Indians. It was not surprising that the Sikh response remained within the general Indian community. The European Economic Commission consisted of white settlers Lord Delamere, T.A. Wood, Major Grogan, T.C. Hunter, the Chief Customs officer, Kampe the treasurer. They released statement, which fuelled racial hatred between white settlers and Indians but enhanced unity amongst people from Indian sub-continent. In part the report termed people from Indian sub-continent as being:

----- repugnance to sanitation and hygiene, *and that* the moral depravity of Indian is equally damaging to the Africans¹²⁴.

The then secretary of state, Milner took note of the economic commission's report and described it as deplorable and pronouncing against all Indian immigration into any part of Africa¹²⁵.

Meanwhile, the damage had been committed. Social hatred between the two races Indians and Whites had been registered. Thus the White racial sentiments fuelled the Sikh-Indian identity however the Sikhs remained less conspicuous.

The land regulation (see Ch. 4) denied the Sikhs access to land, particularly, the fertile white highlands. This isolated many Sikhs to become entirely urban dwellers like other Indians, away from the Africans. In public service, the Sikhs like the other Indians had higher salary scales and generally better terms of service, including medical and residential package than Africans. The colonial government regulation scaled any chance for common social cause between Africans and immigrants from Indian sub-continent. Sikhs were highly placed and risked losing their privileges, if they antagonised the colonial social system.

Sikhs, who settled to agriculture at Kibos (see Ch.2) as early as 1903 and those who later bought land, between Nakuru and Eldoret, from the white settlers who left Kenya, just before and after independence, lived in the social class of their own. They interacted with Africans at master-servant level as was already prevalent. This was partly because of racism instituted by the racial statutes.

Sikhs' position as other Indians, in the colonial government as second to the Europeans was envied by Africans because of the racial inclinations, however communally united the Sikhs to other Indians. Their position was racially higher than that of the Africans in the colonial government¹²⁶. The assigning of middle rank jobs to Sikhs soured the relationships of the two communities. Africans came to see Sikhs and other Indians as aiding colonialists.¹²⁷

Similarly, the white settlers grouped and condemned all religions of immigrants from Indian sub-continent without distinguishing Sikhism from Hinduism or Islam. Consequently many Africans came to understand them as a homogenous religious community. Hence any accusation of one Indian religion or community was taken for granted as applying to all. Thus, when the European missionaries painted all religions from the East as backward, obscurantist and unwholesome¹²⁸ and a barrier to civilisation¹²⁹ applied to Sikhism as it did to other oriental religions. This in part explains why Sikhism, even with her universal ideals did not spread in Kenya.

The racist religious sentiments perpetrated by the white settlers in effort of gaining support to dominate Indians in Kenya influenced inter-communal relations. More specifically, it distanced Sikhs like other Indians from Africans, and partly became a hindrance to the spread of Sikhism in Kenya.

In 1921 M.K. Archer, the chairman of Convention of Associations propounded the importance of Christianity by discrediting oriental religions. He described Christianity as religion of western civilisation, and foundation of religious education to the Africans. While

Indian's, according to M.K Archer, professed alien creeds.¹³⁰ M.K Archer wanted to maintain white superiority in racial hierarchy. Another white settler, Frank Watkin in objection to spread of eastern religion, described it as furthering the prophet of Arabia.¹³¹

Thus, as the white settlers asserted their religious and social supremacy, they aroused racial hatred between themselves and Indians and distanced Africans from Indian religions and in the event aroused unity of the Sikhs and other Indians. The non-proselytising nature of Sikhism isolated them from the wider African community.

Though Cynthia Salvador is of the opinion that Sikhs in Kenya went out of their way and became proselytising, but the underlying aim, which is part of Sikhs' practice, was to popularise their religion, be known as distinct. Sikhs do not persuade people to join their religion. As far as they were concerned, different religions were different paths leading people to the same Supreme Being. Consequently, any attempt otherwise would have been in contravention of Sikh tenets.¹³² Meanwhile, despite the European's anti-African colonial policies that subjected Africans to forced labour and taxation the proselytising nature of Christianity coated with persuasion, to a greater extent improved African white relationships.¹³³ Still there were Africans converted into Christianity. Thus, the failure of the Sikhs to propagate and practise their unique tenets of their religion like castelessness, absence of segregation based on race or creed, strengthened Africans' belief of the Sikh-Indians homogeneity. Consequently the Sikhs were not seen as religiously different from other Indians.

Colonialism in Kenya set Africans, Indians and White settlers into rivalry for social, economic and political opportunities. Unfortunately to the Africans, this competition was racially determined and achieved. Africans by virtue of their colour were automatically last. Hatred crept into inter-communal relationships, particularly those communities that followed each other on the racial hierarchy. This paved way for permeation of stereotypes and prejudice among rival groups.

Damaging to Sikh and African race relationship, was the colonialists' depiction of all people of Indian origin as exploiters of the Africans. In 1903, the European-owned press, East Africa and Uganda Mail, launched an attack on Indians, portraying them as exploiters. The editorial described Indians without regard to their religio-communal differences as agents in ruining the economy¹³⁴. Sikh business community associated with general Indian community got painted in shady colours. The description of the Indians as crafty, moneymaking class, cunning and intensely impolite particularly to the Africans¹³⁵, was equally applicable to the Sikhs business class. In 1934 (see Ch. II) the colonial government enacted regulation aimed at protecting the non-business group, most of them Africans from the Asian exploitation. Furthermore, the association of Sikhs and other immigrants of Indian sub-continent as mere birds of passage¹³⁶, without intention of permanent settlement in (Kenya) made the Sikhs like other Indians look unreliable class. The pioneer Sikhs who came in Kenya (then East Africa Protectorate) had in fact little intention of staying. The majority of them intended to return to India after they had saved up enough money to buy property or set up business back home¹³⁷. Thirty years after independence this theory about Indians is still held as true consequently the Sikh like the other Indians are seen as paper citizens.

The opinion about Sikhs, as part of the general Indians and as exploiters was also echoed by African nationalists. Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of the republic of Kenya, prior to independence described Indians, without taking note of their communal differences as suckers¹³⁸. Against this background Indians appeared to have a privileged place in colonial government. As Kenya advanced towards independence, Sikhs became a divided house as to whether to support the Africans or not. This was explicit in Tom Mboya's warning to the Indians against remaining on the fence in nationalistic struggle. This was in disregard of his being the child of trade unionism, pioneered by a Sikh, Makhan Singh.¹³⁹

A former European politician Humphrey Slade confessed with reference to the

creation of racial mistrust that,

In all endeavours and achievement, however, the European politician of those days (among whom I count myself in a small way) have not so much of which to be proud of in the field of race relations. That is not because we, or those we represented were ill disposed towards people of other races, or even that we feared them---. On contrary most of us individually had very happy personal relations with Africans and Asians (*Sikhs inclusive of Asians*) in all walks of life, even with our political opponents of other races. The trouble lay in a sincere conviction of our racial superiority, and in ability to understand that it is not enough to do good things for other people, if at the same time you refuse to treat them as having equal status¹⁴⁰

The confinement of the Sikhs within family ties for example in business created racial suspicion and hatred between Africans and Sikhs. The family organised Sikh business, meant that only their kinsmen, even those of inferior experience and later academic qualification, were employed in managerial position, unlike an African howsoever qualified. Social aloofness resulted from a situation where Africans of better academic qualifications were forced by circumstances to work under, a manager of inferior academic status. As a consequence many African professionals preferred to work elsewhere particularly in the government and other European owned or non-governmental bodies than in Sikhs or Indian firms. Africans in Sikh firms generally handle manual and clerical jobs¹⁴¹.

There was however an argument advanced to the effect that British colonial policy socially never worked at cross-purposes with either the Sikhs or the general Indian communities. Ghai D.P. and Ghai Y.P. in the paper entitled "Asians in East Africa problems and prospects" argued that racial compartmentalisation system instituted in colonial Kenya suited the people from Indian Sub-continent. The authors argued that the Asians were conservatives, and any legal enforcement to maintain isolation was welcome. The Sikhs according to the authors' argument were happy to live in exclusively Indian restricted areas away from the wider Kenyan society, to pursue their own traditional and religious ways. They similarly argued that, the segregate policies made it easier for the Asians abroad to identify their roles with much ease¹⁴².

Though the two made observations that held truth in certain circumstances, however it could not be systematically applied in all circumstances, more specifically because racial compartmentalisation was accompanied by apathy and inferiority institutionalised on basis of Skin colour. This argument fails to explain why a fraction of Sikhs went to the extent of inter-marrying Africans (*seen later in the chapter*). It fails to account for differences in behaviour of different Indian communities, with regard to doctrinal differences. Sikhism as mentioned earlier underlines castelessness, social equality and universal humanity. These principles could not be spread in Kenya partly because of colonial regulation. This argument similarly fails to explain why the colonial government instituted regulations only aimed at facilitating Indians' coexistence. The argument similarly downplays the inter-dining (however on small scale) seen at *Langar* at Sikh temples and inter-communal projects whose impact supersedes race, religious creed and or status barrier. Sikhs were forced by circumstances to adapt to the new environment.

A peculiar feature with the Sikhs in Kenya was that, they were among the first Asians to initiate at least on a large scale, Indian African integration through inter-racial marriages. In the Maasai the early Sikhs who penetrated that area during the first three decades of 20th, century, particularly in the 1930's integrated into the Maasai. They ate their food, dressed like them, slept with African women and above all transacted business in hides and skins¹⁴³.

At Meru, the pioneer Sikhs married African women bringing forth, an Afro-Sikh community¹⁴⁴. The inter-marriage of Wanja Wa M'inaga (African lady) and Naurang Singh in 1920's marked a significant stage in Sikhs' racial inter-marriage. The couple's descendants dispersed through migrations and further intermarriages to several parts within, and out of Kenya.

Mansingh Munene, Bhagat Singh, Tarlchon Singh living at Meru are among the Afro-Sikhs in Kenya. Munene's father was born in the Punjab India. He was first employed

by the British as a soldier and brought in Kenya by the British during the first World War. While in Kenya he ventured into private business after the military service. First established a sugar factory at Nairobi, before he moved to Fort Hall, the present Muranga. While there, Luxman married an African lady from Kerogoya who became Muncene's mother. The two (Luxman and his wife) moved and settled at Runyenjes, where they once again established a brown sugar factory.

After the death of Luxman, his son Muncene was employed as a driver before he moved to Kianjai and established a retail shop business. It flourished in the initial stages, until the construction of the new tarmac road away from Kianjai shopping centre. The road connected Maua and Meru, and so impaired trade at Kianjai shopping centre, leaving it a ghost shopping centre, without major economic activity. Consequently most Afro-Sikhs moved to Meru town.

Though there were various reasons adduced for the failure of the Afro-Sikh settlement at Kianjai however some of them were lopsided. For example associating the failure of the settlement with the Afro-Sikhs peculiar identity, what was called 'identity crisis'. There were non-African communities who have survived elsewhere despite their unique identity for example the Sikh community at Kibos¹⁴⁵. The main contributory reasons for the failure of Afro-Sikh settlement included their failure to integrate in the local agrarian based economy. This left them without an economic career. Finally, the Afro-Sikhs' failure to adapt to the local education and low business turn over at Kianjai than Meru forced the Sikhs out.

At Meru, the Afro Sikhs ventured into business of their fathers, construction works while others have taken up shop keeping for example "Singh Auto spares", owned by an Afro-Sikh Bhagat Singh. He was born in 1937 at Kianjai. Tarlochan Singh similarly an Afro-Sikh has a construction company with offices at Sikh Gurudwara Meru.

The African-Sikh intermarriage gave Sikhs a unique identity from other Indians in

Kenya. It enhanced inter-racial understanding. The inter-marriage between the two races, dented belief of African backwardness,¹⁴⁶ regarding Africans as unfit partners for inter-marriage. Though the inter-marriage went along way to shatter the casteism amongst Sikhs, however these intermarriages remained exception and casteism among the Sikhs continued with regard to matrimonial alliances in Kenya as was the case in India¹⁴⁷.

The Afro-Sikh community earned disapproval from the Sikh community. This forced the offspring to hate their African heritage¹⁴⁸. As a result, most of them (Afro-Sikhs) reacted by getting married to Indian girls, in an effort to rid themselves of black complexion for their offspring. Bhagat Singh, an Afro-Sikh, admitted that there was racism between the Afro-Sikhs and Sikhs. He observed that racism influenced socialisation. During social interaction, one's caste was determined by one's traditional name. People of the same caste interacted more freely unlike an Afro-Sikh, who is seen as much below the Ramgarhia or the Chamar¹⁴⁹. Thus, the total integration of the Afro-Sikhs into the larger Sikh community remains in limbo. The fact that the Afro-Sikhs lost touch with the Punjabi language and could not read Gurmukhi, further distanced them from the larger Sikh community, though they cling to Sikh practises of religion.¹⁵⁰

Three decades after independence a large number of Sikhs express reservations towards inter-racial marriages¹⁵¹. Sikhs, felt disgusted with African culture that permitted men marry several wives.¹⁵² Sikhism, as mentioned earlier advocates monogamy and, equality of women with men. This in part explains, why, inter-marriages between Sikhs and Africans remained one sided. Sikh men married African women but no African man married Sikh women¹⁵³. Thus it is pertinent to point out that many of the initial Sikh African inter marriages were largely circumstantial. Sikh men could not get Sikh women to marry due to the larger figures of the Sikh male population. The disapproval of Sikh community was obvious. None of the inter-marriages between Sikh men and African women was reported to have undergone the customary Sikh wedding procession¹⁵⁴ in which Sikhs participated.

The increased accessibility between India and Kenya also reduced such incidental inter-racial marriages between the two groups. The different socio-economic status between the Sikhs and Africans was yet another factor that hindered inter-racial marriages. The fact that there existed suspicion between Africans and Indians invoked since colonial period was yet another reason. Similarly reports of murders, claimed to be perpetrated by African women against their Indian husband for the sake of inheriting wealth inhibited further marriages.¹⁵⁵ Culturally, as earlier mentioned, there were no traditionally agreed matrimonial alliances between Ramgarhia Sikhs and Jat Sikhs. This shows how difficult it was, for African and Sikhs to ally in matrimony. The choice of marriage partners, (as stated earlier in this chapter) among the Sikhs, was a matter to be finalised by the family, hence it squeezed out the chances of inter-marriages.

Sikhs social behaviour in USA was not different. C.H. Loehain, while commenting on the Sikhs in California, noted their distinct identity, in social organisation and biological merging.

In terms of the social organisational structures of American society, the East Indians are even less an integral part of American life¹⁵⁶.

As concerns their biological merging, it was noted

---in terms of biological merging into the stream of American life is less likely even for immediate future than it appeared to be a decade or so ago¹⁵⁷.

Sikhs' settlement in Kenya was also associated with the establishment temples. The temples were the primary social institution set up by the Sikhs. A Gurudwara (Sikh temple) for the Sikhs was a central institution. It catered for socio- cultural and political needs. The Sikhs who assembled at the Gurudwara were in the presence of the Guru. When they collectively took up a decision, no one would break it without reprimand. Sanctity was attached to collectivity, it was not a secular kind of collectivity but sacred¹⁵⁸. At the Gurudwara the Sikhs come face to face to holy word, the Guru Granth Sahib, which gave

them veto power over the secular¹⁵⁹. Gurudwara was and is not only a place for worship but a place where Sikh festivals were held and the Sikh children learnt their mother tongue Punjabi as well as the tenets of their religion.

The Guru Granth Sahib for the orthodox Sikhs (those Sikhs who belief in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib as the final Guru) is kept in one of the largest rooms of the Gurudwara. When the worshipper approaches Guru Granth Sahib bows down and places offerings besides it and then walk out in a way as to keep his face toward the Guru Granth Saheb and then sits. Though Sikhism is opposed to worship of other deities however there were Sikhs both in Kenya and India who either unknowingly or otherwise adore the Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Nanak like Jesus Christ warned Sikhs against idol worship:

Shall we 'O' brother" says Nanak "worship God and goddesses? What can I ask of them and what can they give¹⁶⁰.

Guru Nanak similarly refuted idol worship when he advised his followers,

Not to fall into doubt, worship none but God, no tombs or shrines¹⁶¹.

At the Gurudwara, the Sikh worship begins with singing of hymns and finish with (*Ardas*) prayer. As they worship, the Sikhs ask for humility, knowledge and protection. The Sikhs in India have no priests any Sikh faithful may conduct the prayer or perform the ceremonies in the Gurudwara. In Kenya, the Sikhs have persons who may be described as priests (*granthis*) attached to the Sikh temples. They are held in high esteem because most of them come straight from the Punjab and hence are seen to be more informed religiously about Sikhism. Attached to the temple is usually a communal dining hall *langar* with attached kitchen and rest house, for all travellers. However, there exists some sort of mutual suspicion, in accommodating Africans.¹⁶²

2.3 The Sikhs' Temples and Social Institutions

By dint of hard work, Sikhs were able to earn wealth which they used build the Gurudwara. Since many Sikhs were artisans, carpenters and masons and timber was readily

available made it possible for them to construct temples in various localities of the urban centres in Kenya, largely through 'Kar seva'¹⁶³ (voluntary service). There were professionally qualified Sikhs in construction industry (who also included architects)¹⁶⁴. They took part in design and construction of Gurudwaras as part of 'Kar seva'. The family of Mediratta of Elementaita made generous contribution of restoring Sikh Gurudwara at Nakuru after it was ravaged by fire. In the recent times another example is the architect T.S. Nandhra¹⁶⁵.

In Kenya the Sikhs have established temples in Mombasa, Nakuru, Meru, Makindu, Nanyuki, Nyeri, Thika and Magadi with one temple in each town. In Kitale, Kisumu and Eldoret there are two temples, one for the Ramgarhia Sikhs and the other for Sri Guru Singh Sabha. At Nairobi there are eight Gurudwaras.

The members of Sri Guru Singh Sabha built the first Gurudwara in Kenya which, was also the pioneer in Africa, at Kilindini in 1893. The need for space made the management of Sri Guru Singh Sabha purchase two acres of land in 1918. A guest-house comprising of eleven rooms and a kitchen was constructed in 1927. In July 1936, the Sri Guru Singh Sabha was registered. The foundation of the temple for a spacious Gurudwara was laid on 13th April 1937 by Hem Singh. Meanwhile a Sikhs' Girl school had been constructed in 1933, and by 1939, came up a second school to meet the growing demand for schools. By 1963 the school had about 200 students.¹⁶⁶ The first Sikh Gurudwara at Nairobi was a tent set up in 1899, through the aid of Sardar Kishen Singh, in conjunction with Sikhs then employed in police and in the railway. In 1911 the tent was replaced with a dome shaped concrete temple¹⁶⁷. At Kisumu, the Gurudwara was inaugurated in 1909. At first the Sikhs at Kisumu, constructed a simple corrugated iron sheet temple, on the land then assigned to them by the railway authorities. Through the efforts of Babu Didar Singh Sandhu, Sardar Kehar Singh, Sardar Jaget Singh, Kala Singh, Babu Nathu Ram, the temple was built at Kisumu. It was completed and opened in 1914. The attached guest-house to the Kisumu Sikh Centre was useful for the Sikhs and other Asians who travelled to and from

Uganda, Tanzania and made a stopover at Kisumu. Apart from the temple and its guest-house, the Sikhs at Kisumu Sardar Katar Singh Grewal, Dr. Katar Singh and Sardar Dhanwant Singh put up a school, initially called Government of India school Kisumu. The school was rented to the government in 1926. It functioned up to 1939 and then leased to the Produce Control until 1952, when it was given back to the Singh Sabha and then was renamed Sikh Girls School. Girls' education to the Sikhs was an important subject both in India and Kenya. This was significant since at that time, education for Girls was neglected. The construction of Girls school was a pointer to Sikhs' commitment to equality between sexes.

Writers like Cynthia Salvador have attributed different shapes of the Gurudwara to the Sikhs' tenet of repudiation of ritual in the way they constructed their temples in East Africa. However this observation is erroneous based on external appearance. The integral nature of the Sikhs temple remains intact. More specifically the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.¹⁶⁸ Nanyuki Gurudwara, like the Nyeri Gurudwara is a bungalow designed unlike those at Nairobi. Both, Nyeri and Nanyuki Sikhs' temples are attached with the rest house, kitchen and dining hall. The Nyeri Sikh Centre was, started in 1920, by Kartar Singh, Waryam Singh, Mistry Karam Singh and Dr. Lal Singh. The new Gurudwara was established in 1933.

Sikhs, similarly constructed a magnificent temple at Makindu after the first Gurudwara was destroyed by fire. The initial Gurudwara at Makindu had been built and completed in 1930 by the Sikh railway workers, businessmen and other Sikhs from Public Works Department. Fire burnt down both the Gurudwara and Sikhs' holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. The present Makindu Gurudwara is built in stone serves travellers, particularly Indians travelling to and from Mombasa, who make a stop-over and get free food and accomodation.

At Nakuru, the Sikhs constructed a school alongside the Gurudwara. The Sikh school was among the first schools at Nakuru. At Eldoret, the first Sikh centre whose construction

started in the second decade of the 20th century is currently under the management of Ramgarhia Sikhs. Sri Guru Singh Sabha Eldoret was established in 1938. The new Sri Guru Singh Sabha is a recent construction, completed in 1962. Adjacent to Mt. Elgon in western Kenya the Sikhs built a small temple at Kitale in 1930.

The number of the Sikh temples in Kenya shows the importance the Sikhs attach to their religion and how it permeates their social life. Apart from spiritual significance, Sikh temples are land marks of their organisational skills. They, also show the extent of their settlement spread and influence in Kenya. Despite the fact that Sikhs built temples in Kenya, its social significance to the Kenyan public remains minimal. Only the limited employment opportunities are available to the Africans, sweeping, cooking and security guard. Sikh centres to the Africans are without religious meaning.

Similarly despite the fact that Sikhism has been in Kenya for many years there are no African Sikhs. The beturbaned Africans at either of the Sikh temple, particularly at Makindu, do so as part of their working uniform without religious significance¹⁶⁹. Much as the Sikh temples are recognised by the Africans as sacred places, there is very little knowledge of what Sikhism is all about. Unlike Christian churches where most Africans have been members, and have free entry and exit without detailed formalities, (unless, security is involved) the Sikh centres remain restricted places. All visitors particularly people of African descent have to go through a procedure to secure admission. During research it took us about an hour to gain access to any of the temples. The concern for security, was the main reason behind the detailed scrutiny. The mistrust between the Sikhs and Africans, existing since the colonial period, has failed to melt down¹⁷⁰. Africans' and Sikhs' awareness of the existence social strains complicated the matter even more¹⁷¹. The extent of mistrust and suspicion between Asians and Africans was known at the national level even in independent Kenya.¹⁷² The political leaders often cautioned the domestic African servant against peddling lies about their Asian employers¹⁷³. In order to ease racial tension African

political leaders aware of the inter-racial tension between Asians and Africans, have cautioned their colleagues in the political establishment against making inflammatory statement that may jeopardise the already volatile social situation¹⁷⁴.

Meanwhile the schools constructed alongside the Gurudwara are a significant social contribution of the Sikhs in Kenya. Despite the institutions' racial orientations during colonial period, (at the time when only Asians were allowed entry) stuck to the noble aim of increasing literacy horizon. With the advent of Independence in 1963, the schools were made non-racial. Sikhs built Khalsa Boys and Girls at Nairobi Racecourse road, Khalsa South 'C' primary school, Guru Nanak primary schools. Others are at Mombasa and Kisumu. Individual Sikhs built other institutions, for example the Lochab brothers, the Gulab Lochab Academy Eldoret.

The Khalsa School at Nairobi was built in 1930. It has secondary and primary sections still in existence up to date. Ragi Labh Singh, at that time, the president of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurudwara, S. S Vohra and Mohan Singh all educationalist were the initiators of the Khalsa school¹⁷⁵ The subsequent expansion of the school was however done through 'Kar Sava' and individual donations¹⁷⁶. On the walls of the school, there are inscriptions of the names of the donors and the amount donated. Nearly all classrooms were constructed at the cost of Ksh. 2,000 each.¹⁷⁷

In Kenya, the aim of the Singh Sabha associating schools with the temples was enhanced by racial discrimination in schools. The Sikhs set up schools in order to counter the challenges to which Sikh youths were exposed. Their aim was to instil and propagate Punjabi language particularly among the youths as a means of integrating them, to their culture and religion. The knowledge of Punjabi, it was thought, would enable the Sikh youths to read their Holy Scripture the Guru Granth Sahib. Secondly, it was to enhance literacy.

After independence, the schools were secularised, accompanied by an increase of African students. However, the increase of Africans in Sikh institution resulted into an

exodus of Sikh students from these schools. Sikh parents transferred their children from these schools to those earlier preserved for the white race, while other parents sent their children to study abroad. The reasons behind the Sikhs' transfer of their children included the legacy of casteism and the belief in their superior racial equation. The colonial regulations had relegated the Africans to last place, while the Sikhs were in second place according to the racial hierarchy. Similarly the Sikh schools were poorly equipped compared to the European vacated schools.

Meanwhile, schools as centres of enhancing racial integration among the youth, did not achieve much. As mentioned above, when the Africans started to join the Sikh schools most of the Sikh children were transferred to better schools. Similarly, the few Sikh children who went to school together with Africans were haunted by colonial racial legacies and the animosity which prevailed between Indians and Africans, distorted possibilities of racial integration.

Sikh family, as a basic and first unit for integration of the Sikhs' culture had to acclimatise to inter-racial societal demands if complete integration was to be achieved. Unfortunately the Sikh family unit remained Punjabi.

Professor Nyasani (Professor of Philosophy University of Nairobi) however mechanical, argued along the same line, when he opposed the view that given time the young Asian youths sharing schools with Africans at public schools would at one time break racial barriers and integrate¹⁷⁸. He asserted that the Asian child's racial attitude were formed and instilled within families (where they were advised against racial interaction) which they carried to school for confirmation. Such that, when the children got home and recount their inter-racial encounters, they were instructed against inter racial-integration¹⁷⁹. According to Nyasani this process went on and on, until it formed a vicious circle, where an Asian Child is born grows up under racist training, becomes old, to the extent that they could no longer integrate, instead they start propagating the same racial prejudice¹⁸⁰. Besides the fact that,

professor Nyasani presented human activities on a linear scale which were too rigid to explain social phenomenon, it is true that the attitude formation and development could not be detached from the family confines, particularly with regard to closed communities like the Sikhs.

At inter-racial schools, the Sikh children aware of their social, religious and economic differences, form their own social groupings, and only interact with selected African students; particularly with families of higher economic status. Most of these relationships were temporal and situational without firm foundations¹⁸¹. Their relationship diminished immediately they parted institutions.

This kind of relationship is not limited among students. The relationship between the Sikh employer and the African employee is similarly functional and situational. It is predominantly master servant. Promotion to positions of leadership in Sikh firms is predominantly racial than merit¹⁸². However at work situations Sikhs constantly interact with Africans because of the nature of their role situation.

The other profession that the Sikhs influenced was in health. After the Sikhs arrived in Kenya, some worked as sub-assistant medical officer, assistant surgeons and nurses. The second generation of the Sikhs had gone to universities and excelled in several professions including medical. By 1959 there were Sikh medical doctors like Kartar Singh, Sarmuk Singh and Kishen Singh.¹⁸³ In private sector, Sikhs served on British Red Cross, Asian blood bank, Indian maternity hospital Social Service league and school children health. The Sikhs, as a community, built clinics and hospitals, like Ramgarhia dispensary Nairobi, Guru Nanak clinic Mombasa, Ramgarhia Sikh dispensary and Nanak Sikh dispensaries both at Kisumu.

The major Sikh medical institution in Kenya is a new establishment the Guru Nanak Ramgharhia Sikh hospital situated at Pangani Nairobi. Unfortunately, the name tends to exclude other Sikhs, the Jat and the Namdharis. Before its elevation as a hospital, it operated

as a clinic until 1985, when it was given hospital status. The hospital serves mostly the middle class people¹⁸⁴.

The Sikhs' role has also been noticeable in sports. They started active sporting in the 1920's. Initially, because of their small number the Sikhs were affiliated to the general Indian sports association the 'Railway Indian Institute'¹⁸⁵ where they remained until they established their own sports club in 1920. Their first sports club was called 'Khalsa Union.' It was formed under the initiative of Messrs Balwant Singh, Kishen Singh, and Sadhu Singh. The first club consisted of fifteen members, whose, aims were to improve physical and mental conditions of the members. Khalsa union was a forum where the Sikhs met as equals to discuss matters affecting them as individuals and as a community. Khalsa union, however faced an early exit due to what was described as

...certain amount of incapability in appreciating the purpose of the activities of the union¹⁸⁶.

Almost immediately, the Sikhs formed another sports organisation Khalsa club. It was, started by Mahan Singh and Bakhtawar Singh. Hockey and cricket were the main games of the club. Volleyball was the third best. Due to internal dissension, however, the Khalsa clubs made an early exit.

Despite their short span the first Sikh sports clubs, set in motion a path for Sikh sporting organisations. After having learnt from their weaknesses from the first two organisations, the Sikhs eventually came up with a new and more formidable organisation under the new name 'Sikh Union of Kenya.' It was formed in 1930. The founders of the union put on record the objective of its establishment as

Providing social, intellectual and physical improvement and to foster mutual understanding and sympathy amongst the members thereof and furthering the general interest of the Sikh community in East Africa¹⁸⁷.

Except for the change of name, from, "Sikh Union" to "Simba Union" which followed the government's decree which outlawed all ethnic and or communal/tribal names

from organisations, (the communal names perceived as enhancing tribalism) for all practical purposes the Simba Union has been mainly confined to Sikh Union¹⁸⁸

For purposes of promoting sportsmanship, the Sikhs reclaimed and built their sports field from virgin land of high gradient. The then white municipal engineer had warned the Sikhs against constructing the field on the steep slope, in a letter to the Sikhs cautioned,

...the land you have applied for is unsuitable for purposes of a sports field and the cost of preparing the ground would be excessive...¹⁸⁹

Sikhs invested heavily in terms of money and energy, and at the end they succeeded in disapproving apprehensions of the white engineer as false.

Membership of the Sikh Union was practically open to wealthy Sikhs of repute. Sikhs who could afford payment of membership fee. Non-Sikh Asians and whites were admitted as honorary members. Much as it was pointed out that the Africans failed to become members because of the exotic nature of the games (i.e. hockey, cricket and volleyball) then played at the club¹⁹⁰. However the colonial racial segregative policy would not permit social union of Africans and Sikhs. Equally important, the suspicion and mistrust that existed between Africans and Sikhs would disfavour ease interaction. In any case up to date, Simba Union is predominantly a Sikh body with negligible number of Africans. This does not however, negate the Sikhs contribution in sports, particularly hockey. Between 1920 and 1959 the Sikh Union held nearly all the trophies then contested for in hockey except the M.R D'Souza Gold Cup¹⁹¹. Some trophies were won thrice and others forever. In the first Olympic team sent out of Kenya in 1956, the Sikhs were dominant numbering eight, excluding the coach Mahan Singh who was also a Sikh. Before he became a coach Mahan Singh had been a player.¹⁹²

The outstanding Sikh hockey players who went to Melbourne in 1956 included, the captain Surjeet Singh, others were Sardara Singh, (nick named Chhura knife), Bhakhtawar Singh, Joginder Singh Kata, Chattar Singh, Ajit Singh, Sher Singh and Bachita Singh. The

achievements of the Sikhs in sports did not only enhance sentimental or emotional satisfactions but also went long way to remove the webs of prejudice that one group held against the other.

More recently, the Sikhs through a rally driver Joginder Singh, displayed their sportsmanship in motor racing. The two brothers, Joginder Singh and his co-driver Jeswant Singh set a record that not many Kenyans be it African or White have surpassed in motor racing. Joginder Singh was a Kenyan by birth, born in 1932, a few miles from Kericho town. His father Bala Singh was a Sikh born at Kandol in Punjab. He migrated to Kenya after 1920.

Unlike many European rally drivers, who began rallying at an early age, Joginder Singh began motor racing at the age of 26 years. He started racing in a Volkswagen for four years

1959 to 1962. The following chart furnishes Joginder Singh's racing career¹⁹³.

YEAR	CAR NO	CO-DRIVER	MAKE OF CAR	POSITION
1959	57	R.M. Patel	Volkswagen	9
1960	66	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Volkswagen	9
1961	16	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Volkswagen	16
1962	44	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Volkswagen	5
1963	75	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Fiat 300	4
1964	80	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Comet	21
1965	1	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Volvo PV 544	1
1966	52	Bharat Bhardwaj	Volvo P132	2
1967	15	H.S. Semhi	Volvo 1225	4
1968	3	Ber Smith	Datsun 2000	5
1969	22	Bharat Bhardwaj	Volvo 1425	2
1970	17	Ken Remyard	Datsun 1600	2
1971	30	Jaswant Singh(Sikh)	Ford Escort	16
1972	9	H.S. Semhi	Ford Escort R.600	RTD.
1973	18	T.M. Samuel	Colt Galant	RTD.
1974	46	David Doig	Lancer Cot	1

In 1965 and 1974, Joginder Singh put Kenya on world map and became the first non-European to win an international motor race in Kenya¹⁹⁴. Out of the sixteen years of Makhan

Singh's motor racing career as shown above, seven years Makhan Singh was co-driven by his brother, also a Sikh Jaswant Singh. The success of the two in 1965 earned them an invitation to Sweden manufacturers of Volvo, the vehicle they had used in the race, for celebration. In 1966 Joginder Singh took part in Swedish rally. Though he performed poorly, but completed the race¹⁹⁵. Like other sports, Joginder Singh's role in motor rallying promoted inter-racial relationship between the Sikhs and Africans. This was because of the publicity he received from the press and, electronic media influenced public opinion to accept the Indian Kenyans as people with a role to play in Kenya's glory.

The Sikhs' race relations and impact in Kenya was influenced by factors ranging from the time of the Gurus as enshrined in their Holy Book the Guru Granth Sahib, to India's independence often characterised by inter-communal animosity. In Kenya the Sikhs race relationship took the same premise as in India however compounded by the colonial statutes which encouraged racial animosity and exclusiveness. The Sikhs' social relationship and impact particularly with the Africans was greatly influenced and determined by the colonial government racial laws. The stereotypes and prejudice propounded by the colonial white society divided the Kenyan society into communities, which were at competition to the other. What is central however, is that, the Sikh integration in Kenya and impact was different from the other Indians.

As a global society the Sikhs social institutions were used to enhance their culture and was therefore a defence against social disintegration. Sikhs participation in sports and rally racing contributed significantly to bridging racial webs.

END NOTES

1. Ganda Singh ed. 'The Sikhs' in Journal of Sikh Studies; The Punjab Past and Present Vol. 16 No. 31-32, Dept. of Historical Studies, Punjab University Patiala, Pub. 1982. P. 1768.
- The Encyclopedia Britannica Vol. xx P. 1768, refers to the word 'Sisya' as 'Shisya', it was derived from 'Sanskrit' language. By its definition Sikhs are disciples of Sikhs' ten Gurus. This definition is confusing because it leaves out the Namdhari and Narinkaris whose doctrine differs from the Sikhs. I have called in this text 'orthodox Sikhs'. The legal definition of the Sikhs (as applied in Indian constitution) encompasses all the Sikhs, does not give the number of the Gurus, the definition is open ended. A definition of a Sikh in 1925 act, see Attar Singh, 'The Management of Gurudwara' in Amrik Singh ed. Punjab in Indian Politics, P199. Jitinder Kaur, The Politics of Sikhs, New Delhi, 1986. P242.
- I solemnly affirm that I am a Kesdhari Sikh, that I believe in and follow the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the ten Gurus only and that I have no other religion.
- According to this text a Sikh is seen within the Kenyan context. Which takes into account the changes the Sikhs acquired however retaining the basic tenets of their faith.
2. W.O. Cole and Riara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices Pub. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1978, P1.
3. To this Ragbhir Singh a History lecturer Guru Nanak Dev university Amritsar, India, concurred with Prof. Param. Bakshish Singh, of Punjabi University Patiala, India. Oral interview April 1997.
4. Mansukhani Introduction to Sikhism Hemkunt Press New Delhi 1977. P.16. The author, although in religious sense answers 124 questions about Sikhs and Sikhism. Much as the author is critical but within Sikh religious context. See Adi Dranthi P 91.
5. Ibid.
6. Guru Nanak was against brutality inflicted to any humanity, Sri Granth Sahib 1192 Kahar Singh 'Sikh Political Values', An analysis in Perspective of Sikh Polity Dan Pub. and Distributors 1993. P.45.
7. Siri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) III P. 922.

8. Sikhs until today emphasize that Nanak epitomized equality. Tajbir Singh made the same observation during the oral interview April 1997. Amritsar India. Khushwant Singh took note of the same fact in his book A History of the Sikhs (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1963) Vol. 1 PP 33, 34.
9. Dharam Singh ed. 'The Social Dimension of Sikh Theology'. In Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harban Singh. Harman Pub. House. 1994, New Delhi. P. 325.
10. SGGS, P473. Also see Ibid.
11. Raghubir Singh lecturer Guru Nanak Dev. University, Amritsar Oral interview April 1997 concurs with Khushwant Singh see his book A History of the Sikhs Vol. 1. P43.
12. Gupta Hari Ram 'The Sikh General 1469-1708" in A History of the Sikhs Vol. (i). Munishiram Manoharlal pub. PVT Ltd. New Delhi. P.422.
13. J.S Grewal retired professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh India. Oral Interview April, 1997. See Ibid. The author stresses the role of the Gurus, particularly Guru Nanak, in salvaging and encouraging inter-communal harmony in India between the Hindus and Muslim.
14. Dharam Singh ed. "The social Dimension of Sikh Theology" in Sikhism and Secularism, Essay, in honour of Prof. Harban Singh Harman pub House 1992, New Delhi P55. Guru Arjun wrote that the four castes, Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Vaisyas and Shudra were partners in divine instruction. Adi Granthi, P747.
14. Tajbir Singh, a Sikh faithful at Golden Temple, Amritsar India, Oral interview, April, 1997.
16. W.O. Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikh: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices . Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1978, P.7.
17. W.O. Cole: "The Settlement of the Sikhs in U.K. Some possible consequences" in Punjab Past and Present NO. 31-32, Vol. 16 1982, ed. by Ganda Singh P419.
18. J.S. Grewal Retired Professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh India.. Oral Interview, April 1997. Concurrs that Sikhs abroad even those in developed countries showed a lot of interest to what happened in the Punjab.
19. Lou Singh A white converted into Sikhism, Oral Interview Oct. 1996. Also see W.O. Cole. The Settlement of the Sikhs in UK. Some possible consequences. In Punjab Past and Present NO. 31-32, Vol. 16 1982, ed.by Ganda Singh. P. 419.
20. Report on census of Punjab, quoted in Government of India, census of India 1881.

21. Dr Purveen Paul lecturer Guru Nanak Dev. University Amritsar, India, Oral interview April 1997. See Thakur Das *Sikh 'Hindu Hain'* (Sikhs are Hindus), Hoshiarpur, 1899, Bawa Narain Singh, *Sikh Hindu Hain* (Amritsar, 1899), Kahn Singh, *Ham Hindu Nahin*, 'we are not Hindus'
22. Census of Kenya, 1911 (NRB Govt. Printer 1912). Report on non native census enumeration made in the Protectorate and Colony of Kenya 1926. (NRB Govt. Printer 1927) P.52. Kenya Population Census 1962 (Non African Population Vol. 4 (NRB Statistical Division 1966). P5.
23. Khushwant Singh, makes an important translation of Nanak's message. See in his book, A History of the Sikhs. Vol. 1. P.29.
24. J.S Grewal and Raghubir Singh lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India, Oral interview April, 1997 concurs with W.O. Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, The Sikhs Their Religious Beliefs and Practices Pub. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1978, P.2.
25. G.S.Khalsa Oral interview August 1996 Nairobi. Represented the Sikhs on the Education Sub-Committee of the Sikh Supreme Council. He participated in the designing of the syllabus for Hindu Religious Studies. Authored a Pamphlet, where he propounded the traditional unity that existed between Hindus and Sikhs. As a contemporary work it reflects on how those traditional principles were and are operative in Sikh/Hindu society.
26. G.S Khalsa Oral interview, August, 1996. See the Brochure by the same respondent, G.S Khalsa, 'The 392 Parkash Ustav' Siri Guru Singh Sabha celebration Sept. 15, 1996.
27. Ibid.
28. Jehangir's private writings has information regarding the hatred he harboured against Guru Arjun because of the popularity which was associated with his preaching. *Tuzuk - i- Jehangir*, 1, 72-73. (Translation by Rogers and Beveridge) See Khushwant Singh, A History of The Sikhs Vol. 1: 1460-1839, pub. 1963, by S.K Mookerjee, Oxford University press, New Delhi) p60
29. Guru Hargobind, fortified Amritsar, built the *Aka Takht*, the throne of God, from where he dispersed justice and temporal orders, while at Harmandir, he dispersed spiritual guidance. Raghubir Singh Oral interview April, 1997.

30. See translation by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, A History of the Sikhs P.68, Macauliffe, M.A The Sikhs Religion, vol. 2 . Oxford 1909, PP. 93-94.
31. Ibid. P. 77.
32. Ibid.
33. Raghbir Singh, Indu Bunga, (Professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh, India) and Grewal J.S. concurred that Sikhs in their military career appeared as opponents to Muslim militancy to the weak the Hindus. See W. Owen Cole; Thinking About Sikhism 1980 Great Britain. P.51. During Diwali, Sikhs are reminded of Guru Hargobind's selfless sacrifice for the release of Hindu rajas. Hangobind refused to be released alone until the Hindu rajas were released with him.
34. Lou Singh Oral interview Oct. 1996. See his book understanding Sikhism Pub. by New approach for occidental Sikhism 1990. P8.
35. G.S Khalsa Oral interview August, 1996. See the Brochure authored by the same person Siri Guru Granth Saheb. During the 391st Parkash Ustav of Sir Guru Granthi Saheb celebrations, August 27, 1995.
36. Ibid.
37. Bakshish Singh, Professor of History, Punjabi University Patiala, India Oral interview April 1997. Khushwant Singh similarly propounds this view in his book op cit. P. 659.
38. The assisination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sparked of a chain of retaliations from the Hindus on October 30, 1984. Raghbir Singh op cit. argued that, this changed the Sikh/Hindu relationship, to the extent that the previous intermarriages were limited.
39. Binapal, the secretary, Sikh Supreme Council Oral interview, August, 1996. Also see W.O Cole Thinking about Sikhism, 1980 P. 51.
40. Rama Kant Agnihotri - Crisis of Sikh Identity: The Sikhs in England. Bahr Publications, New Delhi, 1987 P.12.
41. Raghbir Singh lecturer Guru Nanak Dev. University Amritsar Oral Interview, He added that there was drastic change in the sharing of this cultural traits as a result of the conflicts between the two communities, this was with regard to India. In Kenya the link between the two was not adversely affected.
42. Secretary Siri Gurdwara Meru Oral interview, Oct.1996.
43. Final Report,Cd 2164 P.13.
44. Among the Punjabís and the Gujaratis, interaction was limited because of dietary reasons. While the Punjabis ate meat, the Gujaratis remained vegeterians.

45. Patterson J.L. The Man Eaters of the Tsavo and other East Africa Adventurers Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London. 1907 P. 51.
46. J.S Grewal Oral interview retired professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh India, Oral Interview April, 1997. See his book Essays in Sikh History: Guru Nanak Dev. University Amritsar P.22.
47. Ibid.
48. Shahadat Naama, Brief Account of Sikh Martyrs by Kulmohan Singh, New Delhi pp. 9-30. In their celebrations of the Martyrs' anniversary Sikhs are reminded of the sufferings that the sikhs went through.
49. Ibid.
50. Bakshish Singh, Professor of History, Punjabi University Patiala, India Oral interview April 1997.
51. Tajbir Singh, A Sikh faithful from Jullunder also an official at the Golden Temple. Oral interview April, 1997.
52. Ibid.
53. Raghbir Singh lecturer Guru Nanak Dev. University Amritsar Oral Interview April 1997, also see Ganda Singh, A Brief Account of Sikh People - Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Delhi 1988 P.20.
54. Raghbir Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar India, Oral interview April, 1997.
55. Ibid. Also see Khushwant Singh: op cit. Vol. 2. PP. 112 - 113.
56. Speeches and Writings of Jinnah P. 153 cited by Rajendra Prasad in India Divided P1
57. Joginder Singh, (He worked with department of Education in the later part of colonialism in Kenya), Oral Interview, August 10, 1996.
58. Sharma, an Architect and Vice Chairman Hindu Council of Kenya. Oral interview May 1996. Nandhira T.S. Oral interview, thrice Chairman of (HCK) Oct. 1996.
59. G.S Khalsa Oral interview, August 20, 1996.
60. Ibid. See G.S. Khalsa SGGS (Siri Guru Granth Sahib) the 391st Parkash Ustav SGGS, celebrated jointly by Hindu Council of Kenya and Sikh Supreme Council (K) August, 27, 1995. Daily Nation, Oct. 22, 1987 (The activities of HCK) P. 21. Gurcharan Singh Khalsa, Siri Guru Granth Sahib 392nd Anniversary Parkash Ushtav of Guru Granth Sahib-celebrated by Siri Gurdwara Railway South 'C' on 15, Sept. 1996.
61. Daily Nation, October 22, 1987 P21
62. Bina Pal Oral interview August 1996.

63. Daily Nation April, 14, 1987 'Baisakhi Suppliment'
64. T.S. Nandhra Oral Interview, October 1996. Has taken photographs with members of this sect at their religious function.
65. T.S. Nandhra un-published Bio-Data. New Rehema House, Westlands Nairobi. Also Oral interview October 1997.
66. Cynthia Salvador, in her book, Through Open Door: A View of Asian culture in Kenya. asserted this point.
67. Joginder Singh Oral interview Oct. 1997.
68. Prof. Indu Bunga, Punjab University Chandigarh, observed that even in India there were no traditionally agreed conjugal liaison between Ramgarhia and jat sikhs - however with passage of time tradition had changed such that one could find such union. For A. Bharat's observation see his book The Asians in East Africa. Jayhind and Uhuru 1972. P.70.
69. Parveen Paul, Guru Nanak Dev University, Oral interview April, 1997..
70. Dalip Singh was the last Sikh leader. After he was converted into Christianity, he was taken to Britain. He staged a come back to India but his efforts were thwarted. Raghbir Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India Oral interview April, 1997.
71. Namdharis were religious revivalists who wanted to revert to pure Gurusteaching, particularly that of Guru Amar Das Adi Granthi P787. Davinder Pal Sandhu Sikh in Indian Politics: A Study of a Minority Public publishers New Delhi 1992 p. 60.
72. Mahatma Gandhi sustained Satyagraha non-violent resistance which gained currency in India. He was opposed to caste and religious bigotry which had divided Indian Society.
73. Raghbir Singh, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India. Oral Interview April 1997.
74. Parveen Paul and Raghbir Singh, of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India and Indu Bunga of Punjab University Chandigarh concur. Oral Interview April 1997. Ganda Singh, A Brief Account of Sikh People - Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Sis Ganj, Chandani Chowk, Delhi 1988 P.60.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Even after Ram Singh died while in Burma the Namdharis did not believe. They justified their assertion because he was supposedly supreme and the fact that nothing from him was brought back as evidence that he had died.

79. As a result of their non-co-operation and resistance to the British the Namdhari were kept under surveillance. This had stemmed from suspicion between the British and the Sikhs since the time of Anglo-Sikh war of 1845 - 1846 and 1848 - 1849; and Namdhari debacle in 1872.
80. Punjabi Sikhiya Dharmik, STD. 5-8. Sikh Women Society Nairobi P.53. Rattan Channa Oral Interview, October 1996.
81. Ibid.
82. Jonginder Singh, op cit and Grewal K The Headmistress, Khalsa Schools. Oral interview November 1996, concur to this view.
83. Since its initiation, Sir Guru Singh Sabha enjoyed the British patronage in India. It consisted majorly the educated class and was associated with expansion of literacy of Punjab the Ramgarhia Sikhs on the other hand were looked down upon and this was so within the hierarchical grading of the Indian Society.
84. T.S. Nandhra Oral Interview October 1996.
85. J.S Grewal Retired Professor Punjab University Chandigarh, India. Oral Interview, April 1997.
86. T.S. Nandhra Oral Interview September 1996.
87. Harish Chander Shanna Artisans in the Punjab 1849 - 1947, Occupational change and New Social values, In Journal of Regional History, Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev. University Amritsar. P. 108.
88. Ibid.
89. Indu Bunga, Oral Interview Chandigarh India, April, 1997.
90. Rattan Channa concurs with T.S Nandhra Oral Interview Nairobi, October, 1996.
91. Ibid.
97. Dharmik STD 5-8 by Sikh Women Society Nairobi P.53. Rattan Channa concurs to this information.
93. Ibid.
94. T.S. Nandhra Oral Interview. Nairobi October, 1996.
95. Ibid. T.S. Nandhra, was among the members of East Africa Ramgarhia Sabha. He played a significant role in building Ramgarhia Sikh Temple Pangani, the Headquarter of East Africa Ramgarhia Board.
96. Majit Singh Sidhu in 'Sikh Immigration to Kenya', Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria - Seminar Paper 1983/84 No.1, also is of the same opinion..

97. Rattan Channa, Oral Interview. Nairobi October 1996. She Closely worked with the Sikh Women Society from its initiation. Chairperson Sikh Women Society 1990.
98. Rattan Channa and T.S. Nandhra concurred with regard to this information Oral Interview, October, 1996.
99. T.S Nandhra . Oral Interview October 1996.
100. Ibid.
101. In the Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 23. first published in 1768 by the Society of Gentlemen P. 909, there is a general discussion on the emergences of YMCA and YWCA. See Dr. Herbert Jai Singh, 'My Neighbour The Sikh' in the Journal, Punjab Past and Present Vol. 15 - 1 No 29-30.1981 ed. by Ganda Singh. P. 192.
102. The Office of the Sikh Student Federation is at Siri Guru Singh Sabha Centre Race Course Road Nairobi.
103. Sekhon S. Oral Interview Nairobi. Nov. 1996. He was among the Pioneer member of the Sikh Student Federation. Also see Nanak Prakash 1962. P. 1. Nanak Prakash is an annual magazine published by Sikh Student Federation. The objectives of the student federation are recorded.
104. Ibid.
105. Nanak Prakash 1962 P. 7.
106. Observable fact, traditional identity more meaningful in India as a source of identity and position. Dr. Parveen Paul, lecturer at Guru Nanak Dev University, conceded that he used the turban for identity and for acquisition of privileges, Oral Interview April 1997.
107. Raghbir Singh. Professor of History, Guru Nanak Dev. University, Amritsar, Oral Interview. He stressed that Sikhs were likely to be found drinking than smoking. In Kenya as India one can find Sikhs at drinking place, but even here not many smoke.
108. Guru Nanak's hymns in the SGGS PP 473, 1589, Asa, P473. The Gurus forbid Purdah and Sati and emphasised Monogamous marriage. SGGS P787.
109. SGGS P. 783. Guru Amar Das condemned sati as
A sati is not she, who burneth herself on the pyre of her spouse
Nanak: a *sati* is she, who dieth with the sheer shock of separation
yea, the *sati* is one who liveth contended and embellisheth herself with good conduct;
And cherisheth her lord ever and calleth on him each morning.-----
She who loveth not her spouse,
Why burneth she herself in fire?

For, be he alive or dead

She oneth him not. Adi Granthi 787.

At the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh Sikhism had degenerated, to the extent that sati had been revived. Ranjit Singh's widow performed sati.

110. Ragbir Singh, , Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, Oral Interview April 1997. Concurs with Dharam Singh see 'The Social Dimension of Sikh Theology' in Sikhism and Secularism Harman Pub. House, New Delhi 1992. P. 330.
111. Rattan Channa Oral Interview November 1996
112. Ibid.
113. Members of the Sikh Community (however not all) bow before the Insignia before proceeding to the Gardwara.
114. Dharam Singh, 'The Social Dimension of Sikh Religion' in Sikhism and Secularism Harman Pub. House, New Delhi 1992, P. 324.
115. Avtar Singh, Ethics of the Sikhs, PP6-7.
116. Tajbir Singh of Jullundur, an official Golden Temple Amritsar, India, Oral Interview. April 1997
117. Report by His Majesty's Commissioner, Cd. 1626, P. 25.
118. Report by His Majesty's Commissioner on the East Africa Protectorate (London 1903) Cd. 1626 P.13.
119. W. Simpson's report enclosed in Bowing To Harcourt, July 2nd, 1913 c-o 533/120. See Ross M.W. Kenya From Within : A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1968 PP. 329-330.
120. East Africa Standard January 28, 1915. P3.
121. This involved restriction of sale or lease of land to Indians in areas assigned to Europeans. This was an emphasise of the 1915 land ordinance (see ch. II) which restricted inter-racial land transactions.
122. Ross M.W. Kenya From Within : A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1968 P. 330.
123. Ibid.
124. Hansard, 5th, ser. 41.161, July 14 1920.
125. Lords Debates, July 14, Col. 161 cited by Ross M.W. in Kenya From Within: A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1968 P. 320.

126. NCKK Community Relations Workshop Report. November 1972 PP.21.23 Speech delivered by Minister Foreign Affairs Appendix A.
127. The Colonial Government in Kenya had arranged the Societal opportunities in a hierarchical manner befitting the skin colour. The Europeans were at the helm of the hierarchy, the Sikhs (categorised among Indians) second and Africans were at the bottom. As a result of their middle level, the Africans and Indians were set at competition which often was expressed in envy and hatred.
128. The European Missionaries effort was to close out religious competition from the East.
129. The description of the Eastern religion as barrier to civilisation was an effort intended to curb their spread.
130. "Christianity, the religion of the Western civilisation was the foundation of religious education among the natives. If the Indian(*Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims*) obtained what he was seeking, they would, before long find a mixed European and Asiatic Administration, and as a necessary consequence, the squeezing out of European officials.....was it not reasonable to assume that the Indian would then try to impose the tenets of his own religion on the natives to exclusion of Christianity? Was the native, after being taught the principles of justice and truth, the advantage of hygiene and clean living to be handed over to the control of a people whose religion, aspect of thought and general outlook of life was entirely of a different nature". He questioned, 'What could they say to a boy(*African*) who complained to them' You have taught me to be a Christian, with all that your great religion implies, and now I am to be governed by a race who profess other alien creeds. (Italics is mine.) See Ross M.W. Kenya From Within: A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1968 P. 343.
131. Ibid. P. 345.
132. To the Sikhs God lives in everything, he dwells in every heart: Jaitariki Var, Mohatta, Translation by Gupta Hari Ram, The Sikh Gurus, taught that through God's name all were saved be it Shudra, vaish, Kishatriya or Brahmin. Adi Granth, Bilawal, Moloita iv, translation by Gupta Hari Ram in The Sikh Gurus
133. East African Standard December 26, 1995 'Asian's Identified with African Struggles'.
134. East African Uganda Mail January 1903. See Editorial
135. Ross M.W. Kenya From Within: A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1963 P. 346.
136. Ibid.

137. Parveen Paul, J.S Grewal, of Guru Nanak Dev. University Amitsar India, Oral interview. April 1997. Concurs that Sikhs abroad invested at home(India) and some had land.
138. NCKK Community Relations Workshop Report November 1972. P.22. Pub. by NCKK, NRB.
139. See chapter three.
140. NCKK Community Relations Workshop Report November 1972 Appendix F. P. 52.
141. African informants working in Sikh firms concurred that managerial positions were allocated on the basis of race. At Guru Nanak Ramgarhia Hospital all executive jobs were manned by Indians.
142. Daily Nation: Nov.4, 1995 by Ghai Dharam and Ghai Y.P. Asians in East Africa Problems and Prospects .
143. Though Bharat merely made a supposition with regard to the adaptability of the Sikhs, however research confirms the assertion see A Bharat Asians in East Africa Jayhindu and Uhuru. Joginder Singh Marjara and Senkhon Singh, the two had lived in the Maasai, agreed to this view.
144. 'Now Magazine' in the Sunday Standard, July 5, 1992. P.10 entitled 'Ethnic Mchuzi Mix'.
145. Joginder Singh Marjara, Oral Interview op cit.
146. The colonial society depicted Africans as an inferior race, the descendants of Ham, see the Bible, Genesis 9:18-24
147. Indu Bunga: Professor of History, Punjab University Chandigarh India, Oral Interview, April, 1997.
148. Joginder Singh Marjara, Oral Interview July 1996. He even attributed the up-country settlement of the Afro-Sikhs to their complexion.
149. Bhagat Singh, an Afro-Sikh, born in 1937. Oral Interview October 30, 1996.
150. Of all the Afro-Sikhs interviewed none reported to be fully eloquent in Punjabi, nor could any one fully read the language.
151. SUNDAY TIMES September 29, 1985.
152. Joginder Singh Marjara, Oral Interview October 1996.

153. Throughout research I did not encounter any Afro-Sikh who had parentage of African father and Sikh mother.
154. Mutharu B.S. Oral Interview August, 1996
155. Sikhs attributed lack of intermarriage between Africans and Indians to mistrust which arose of economic difference. This assertion was based on reported arranged murder's of the Indian husband by African women over inheritance of property.
156. Lochain C.H. 'The Sikhs in California' in the Punjab Past and Present Essays in honour of Ganda Singh, ed. by Prof. Harban Singh 1976. Punjabi University Patiala 1976 PP. 297-298.
157. Ibid.
158. J.S Grewal, Professor of History Punjab University, Chandigarh, India. Oral interview, April, 1997.
159. Ibid.
160. See the translation by Gokul Chanda Narang, Glorious History of the Sikhs from the Times and Teachings of Guru Nanak to the Death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh: New Book Society of India 1972. P.288.
161. Ibid.
162. During research I rarely noticed Africans partake in the *langar* apart from those employed at the Sikh Centres.
163. T.S. Nandhra Oral Interview October 1996.
164. Joginder Singh Oral Interview August, 1996.
165. Narain Singh ed. Souvenir, Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi Kenya, opening ceremony of new Sikh Gurdwara Nov.1 1963. P.104, 105. T.S. Nandhra often found time to serve the Sikh Community in his capacity as an Architect and otherwise.
166. Ibid. P.35.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.
169. Lou Singh. a white Sikh became disappointed to learn that the beturbaned Africans at Makindu were not Sikhs, Oral Interview October 31, 1996.
170. The extent of Mistrust between Africans and Sikhs was deep rooted and it involved a cross section of Africans including the household servants (maids). A Bharati also made similar observation - see in his book; Asians in East Africa, JayHind and Uhuru P. 51.

171. From experience and research I found mistrust between Africans and Sikhs and this state of apathy is known between the racial groups, thus reducing chances of racial integration.
172. Daily Nation, June 13, 1988 'Where Racial and Economic line coincide'.
173. Ibid.
174. Sunday Standard, May, 8, 1983.
175. Grewal K. Oral Interview, November 12, 1996. A daughter of Mahan Singh, the founder member of the school. At the time of interview, Grewal was the Headmistress of the Khalsa Primary and Secondary School. On the wall of the Khalsa School names of founder members were inscribed.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. SUNDAY TIMES September 29, 1985. 'Let there be change in Asian Interaction' by Nyasani R.
179. Ibid.
180. Ibid.
181. Ibid.
182. Seminar on Racial and Communal Tension in East Africa. In an article 'Afro-Asian Relationship in Small Town' P.96. The issue of Racial bias in Promotion and Employment is addressed by Julius Gikonyo Kiano.
183. Narain Singh ed. Brochure The Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 59 P.47.
184. T.S. Nandhra, The founder of Guru Nanak Ramgarhia Sikh Hospital. Oral Interview October 29, 1996.
185. Narain Singh Brochure The Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959. P. 47.
186. Ibid.
187. Ibid P. 23.
188. Mohinder Singh Birdee Chairman Simba Union 1996.
Oral Interview August 1996.
189. Narain Singh brochure, The Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959. P. 47.
190. Ibid P.29
191. Ibid.
192. East Africa Standard January 27 1958. 'The Father of Kenya Hockey' Private Papers of Mahan Singh, Appendix 20.

193. Amin Mohammed Roger Benard and R Moll Joginder Singh: The Flying Sikh Trans-Africa Publishers Nairobi, 1975 P. 13.
194. Ibid.
195. Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

3.0 THE SIKHS' ROLE IN THE KENYAN ECONOMY 1890 - 1963

Unlike the Sikhs' social role which encouraged Sikhs' exclusivity, Sikhs' economic role depended on inter-communal transactions amongst the Sikhs and other communities like the Africans, Whites and other Indians. In buying and selling the Sikhs interacted with other communities but as a global society they kept themselves to their religious and social norms which did not open them to complete integration. In this chapter Sikhs' integration in colonial economy is addressed. Similarly the interdependence relationship between the Sikhs and colonial society is put under focus.

The Sikhs' role in Kenya's economy started from the time of Asians' coming as indentured labour and later as intermediaries in the racially structured colonial economy. The establishment of Imperial British East Africa (IBEA), marked a significant change in African economy. The African long distance trade carried out by caravans was substituted by what was described by the British as a 'sound economic system'. From the beginning the Mackinnon company (IBEA) established an open economy which gradually began to substitute the transaction of goods by barter and transportation of goods by caravans. This put the traditional African transactional process in disarray. The African middlemen lost business and were substituted by the Indians and a new means of exchange. A rupee as a new currency introduced in 1898 began to take over from barter trade. However, in the 1890's the impact of the Sikhs to the new economic system was not so diverse. Their role was limited to Railway construction, in the police and military. The Sikhs were fewer in number compared to the Hindu or the Indian Muslims. This situation prevailed up to early 20th century. Over 80% of the Sikh migrant entered Kenya between 1920 and 1949, with a fifth entering in 1920, a third in 1930 s and a fifth in 1940. 14% arrived in 1950. During the 1911 census for example, Hindus and Sikhs were 3205. In 1926, Sikhs were 2 089 and in 1931 they had increased to 4,427. In 1948 Sikhs had increased to 10 621 and by 1962 they had increased to

21,400.¹ While the Muslims over the same period numbered 5339 in 1911, 11,500 in 1926, 15,026 in 1931, 27,585 in 1948 and finally 40,857 in 1962.²

The Sikhs' immigration and participation in Kenya's economy took place first during William Mackinnon's company starting in early 1890's, second under the East Africa Protectorate starting 1895 and later under colonial office from 1905. The demand for the Sikhs arose in the wake of William Mackinnon's company 'Imperial British East Africa' (IBEA), need for military and police personnel from India more specifically from the Punjab. Sikhs were to provide law and order in the company's territory. The foreign office in 1889-1890 asked the Indian office to allow employment of Indian personnel for military and other duties in the company's territories. In response, the Indian office sanctioned the employment of 17th Madras sepoy in East Africa. There was an addition of 400 men for telegraphists, Railway construction and police personnel. By 1893 the Sikhs were increasing in number, evident by a temple (Gurudwara) at Kilindini. This is where the first Gurudwara was built.³ Sikh military personnel increased in subsequent years following the out break of lawlessness exhibited by Mazrui revolt, the Sudanese mutiny in Uganda, the Kabaka Mwanga apprising and the Ogaden threat.⁴

The colonial economy under Mackinnon's company was not entirely a new economic experience to the Sikhs. The traditional economic life style of the Sikhs in India particularly for the Jat Sikhs was that of a soldier-farmer. The Ramgarhia Sikhs, were traditionally artisans, carpenters, blacksmiths and bricklayers. The colonial economy in British East Africa, (in what came to be called Kenya) in which the Sikhs played part was started and established by the British trading company, British East Africa Association. It was started by William Mackinnon in 1887. Prior to the formation of British East Africa Association, Sir William Mackinnon had formed the British Indian Navigation Company, which was changed to British East Africa Association. A year later, in September 1888, the British East Africa Association received the British government recognition and protection

and was organised under the new name 'Imperial British East Africa'.

Thus, the settlement of the Sikhs in Kenya was initiated and organised by the British government. Their subsequent role, apart from the official British policy, resulted from their pursuit of their economic survival with intention of making their life better. Meanwhile, the British' official position of bringing Sikhs and other Indians was negated in subsequent years by the white settlers who made efforts to curtail further immigrants from Indian sub-continent.

The economic structures established by 'Mackinnon's company IBEA and later adopted by the British East Africa Protectorate relegated the Sikhs to an intermediary level. While the Europeans controlled financial institutions, major merchant firms and industry. Thus, the Sikhs mediated between the Africans and Europeans in colonial economy otherwise designed to serve the interests of the white settlers and the Imperial government. The Sikhs like other Indians were brought to East Africa protectorate, not to create competition⁶ but to aid in the settlement and assertion of European rule. They were to handle the middle level positions in the colonial hierarchy. Sikhs were subordinates to the Europeans. As they settled down in the colony the Sikhs' conforming to their middle level in the colonial economy took part in bulking, debulking and in the process took part in extension of money (*rupee*), economy to the areas which initially transacted business under barter system. It is pertinent to note that, this latter role by the Sikhs was incidental and not an outright service either to the colonialist or to the Africans but it was to ensure their economic survival. The Sikhs easily participated in facilitating this like other Indians because they had come from India where the means of exchange had been the same and under same colonial political structures of the British India. The gradual spread of the Sikhs, nearly in the whole of East Africa Protectorate starting from Mombasa, Makindu, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret, Kitale and even in smaller interior centres of the Maasai including the Meru areas enhanced their middlemen role.

The introduction of rupee currency in 1898 had negative impact to the barter system of trade much as its introduction had gone along way to revolutionarise means of exchange. At the time of its introduction many Africans were accustomed to barter trade and least understood that the rupee was a suitable substitute for exchange in goods.

With passage of time, the Sikhs entry in the colonial economy created competition in an otherwise European monopolised colonial trade and institutions. They linked the Africans into the economic system initially alienated from them. In their business transactions, the Sikhs unlike other Indians, interacted with Africans more directly, partly because of the nature of their work that depended on Africans as a helping hand and the fact that Sikhs were free from intense caste laws. Thus, the Sikhs' role in the colonial economy was more direct than, for example, the Hindus whose, relationships anchored on caste principles. Sikhs moved into the interior of East Africa Protectorate settled among Africans and transacted business⁷. While in the interior they not only facilitated change of the traditional African economic transaction from, production which was basically for social subsistence needs to economic accumulations, but also brought goods (referred to later), initially found in larger cities, closer to the people.

However, the Indian community to which the Sikhs were counted as part of had economic linkage with East Africa coast before the 15th century. Nevertheless, the Sikhs systematic settlement in what became Kenya's interior started with the British control of East Coast of Africa and extension of the British rule into the interior by the use of Indian police and military personnel amongst were Sikhs⁸. Sikhs helped the British to expand the political and economic hegemony in colonial Kenya and beyond. On the same premise the Sikhs assisted the British in putting the Africans liberty under subjugation.

The engagement of the Sikhs in the military and police service associated them with provision of law and order. This became a prelude to the Railway construction and expansion of trade. As a military arm of the colonial government in India, the Sikhs formed a

major proportion of the police and military staff of the Punjabis brought to East Africa. In India Sikhs had adopted themselves to disciplined military career." Though they had emerged from a peaceful synthesis of selective ideologies of both Hindus and Muslims, they gradually acquired martial characteristics which were instilled amongst them by the Gurus. The Sikhs' conversion into militancy was, pioneered by their sixth Guru, Hargobind (1595-1644). This followed the murder of his father who was also a Guru, Arjun, he was the fifth Guru. The martial attributes of the Sikhs were perfected and carried forward by the Sikhs' tenth Guru, Gobind Singh (1666-1708), later by Banda Singh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh.¹⁰

Apart from those Sikhs who worked in ensuring security, other Sikhs took part in the railway construction as indentured Indian railway workers. Not all Sikhs were coolies. 30% of Sikh migrants were without formal education. 45% had primary education of standard one and four. 20% had stopped between standard five and nine while 5% had completed either junior or senior Cambridge examination.¹¹ The largest fraction of the Sikhs, unlike other Indians who came to East Africa Protectorate, were artisans. They were the Ramgarhias who worked in the railway workshops as carpenters and masons.

Sikhs working mainly as artisans in the railway workshop significantly contributed to railway construction covering 582 miles from the East coast in 1895 to the lake at Kisumu. The construction work involved, steady demand of labour from Indian sub-continent. In 1896, for example, there were 3,948 Indians employed on the railway. They increased to 6,986 in 1897 and by 1898, there were 13000 Indians.¹² By, March 1901 there were 19,742 Indians working on Uganda railway. In 1903, at the time the committee constituted to oversee the construction of the railway was dissolved a total of 31,983 Indians had been employed to work on the railway. This was according to official records.¹³ A total number of the Sikhs employed on Uganda Railway in various capacities was confusing because all Indian workers on the railway were categorised as Indians. In the report of 1898, however, the cumulative individual contribution of each worker was up to date.¹⁴

Sikhs who remained after 1901 were re-deployed in various capacities as, booking clerks, railway store men, accountants, railway guards, artisans, technicians, signalers, station masters, surveyors, in police force, public works department, post office including engine drivers. In 1908 Bishen Singh and Sohan Singh were engine drivers. Others were Allam Din of 1918, Bhim Sen of 1925, Gurdev Singh was an engine driver between 1947 and 1982, Karam Singh 1945 and 1978.¹⁵

The colonial police, amongst whom the Sikhs formed a significant proportion, were not excellent. Majority of them, were recruited in India or from amongst the Punjabi working on the railway. Some were coolies. They lacked efficiency, discipline and often applied 'trial and error'¹⁶. This was explicit for example in 1899 and 1900. In 1899, the Indian railway workers clashed with railway police accusing them of torture and failure to curb theft in their bazaar¹⁷. In 1900, the Nairobi Indians were compelled to close bazaar because of random shooting that left an Indian trader dead while asleep¹⁸. A colonial chief justice, whose previous occupation in the protectorate was that of magistrate and Judge described colonial police force in a letter he wrote to captain R. F. Rainsford;

As magistrate in Mombasa, I was, in those early days, somewhat intimately acquainted with the working of this composite and heterogeneous body. One has to admit that the system of recruitment and want of training together with all the other disadvantages from which the force suffered, made it extremely unlikely that their activities would prove in any way satisfactory, but the practical results were somewhat amazing. Burglaries of the most daring character were committed constantly, almost under their eyes and almost went undetected---The Altar cloth was stolen from the church and the cashiers' box from the law courts without any one being apprehended. Indian merchants made constant complains of the losses they suffered by robbery and asked piteously if something could not be done.¹⁹

Nevertheless Sikhs' labour, unlike that of other Indians was highly demanded for by both the Indian colonial office and the government of East Africa Protectorate. This was demonstrated by the India's colonial government reluctance to release many Sikh soldiers, who were equally needed there.²⁰ The Indian colonial government adamantly withheld her Punjabi personnel until the intervention of foreign office and the take over of (IBEAC) by the

Imperial government, to East Africa Protectorate.²¹ This was followed by a recruitment of a contingent of 300 Punjabis. The high demand for Sikhs was however not reflected in terms of the package that was paid to them. Sikhs were categorised as Indians and paid between £49 and £60 per annum. This was less compared to white workers. Hilton Young and governor Gerouard made similar observations. The former lauded the Indian artisans and mechanics.²² Governor Gerouard pointed out that Indian labour was cheaper compared to European labour, and that their salary rates sustained the running of the colony.²³

Thus, the salaries of railway workers were racially determined. The fact that the Sikhs like other Indians were not involved in the determination of their salaries, the much-celebrated Indian cheap labour involved exploitation. The British took advantage of the Sikhs' desperate state in India and paid them less. Thus, the construction of Uganda railway involved a great deal of sacrifice, particularly from the skilled artisan Sikhs²⁴

At the end of railway construction, Sikhs who remained easily adapted themselves to the new occupations and were joined later by their kin and co-religious groups in subsequent years. Sikhs who could not be employed started private work, which included tailoring, black smith and masonry. Traditionally, the Sikhs had evolved into a courageous community capable to face any uncertainty of whatever kind. Guru Arjun advised the Sikhs to be adventurous. He had asked them, to travel abroad in central and west Asia, and import better horses for sale in India.²⁵ Chandra Ram summarised the Sikhs adventurous attributes as, those who adopted their body, mind and understood, the changes. This was whether in harsh climatic condition for example, burning sun, heavy rains, or freezing winter.²⁶ In Canada, like East Africa the Sikhs acclimatized to new environment and occupations.²⁷ As a result of their historical background, the Sikhs had developed dynamic attitude towards life. Sikhs in India developed; capacity for adjustment to change which made them mentally, culturally and physically one of the least 'rooted' community in India²⁸. The adventurous attitude of the emigrant Sikhs in Kenya was not a new phenomenon. It had been sanctioned and imbibed

into the Sikh community by pioneer Sikhs, who also in calculated fearless and castelessness attitude of adventure.

Unlike many immigrants from India who were in East Africa, a very small number of Sikhs became shopkeepers. Since 70% of the Sikhs who came to Kenya had artisanry background (the Ramgarhia) carpenters, masons and black-smiths directed the colonial economy along similar job orientation. Many set up workshops and furniture centre²⁹.

The initial Sikhs, particularly the business group were exposed to various hindrances in their transactions. The first major hindrance was poor means of transport, in some regions the paths were inaccessible. African businessmen brought uneconomical quantities of supplies on the market. This was however a pertinent characteristic of African production system whose aim was to subsist.³⁰ Racial suspicion from the locals and hostile African communities, whose territories were not traversed by aliens. Threat to foreigners was reported for example in the central part of East Africa Protectorate. In 1902, the Kikuyus killed five Indians and murdered an entire Indian caravan.³¹ The Nandis and Kisii also displayed hostility to the foreigners, during the railway construction. In 1908, Kisii's murdered two Indians. Akambas attacked and almost exterminated railway workers as they sought food.³² It was partly, from same premise that Grogan, a South African white settler in Kenya suggested to the colonial government in 1909 to stop further Indian influx to Kenya due to hostility that existed between Africans and Indians. According to Grogan, hatred was far instilled to be corrected.³³ To a greater degree however, Grogan's final sentiments were not without racial prejudice.

While in the interior, the pioneer Sikh businessmen in East Africa Protectorate, transacted business with agents stationed at major cities, at that time Mombasa and Nairobi. As a result they were faced by higher transport costs and travelling risks. The traders were thus, forced to adjust prizes upwards and charge higher to match the transport cost. They were similarly forced to stock more in order to cut down transport costs. In the event they

kept more than it could be bought. At the same time, since the traders imperfectly understood the needs of their customers they occasionally stocked what was not of immediate need on the market. The basic requirement for the Africans was to subsist. The other problems included diseases like malaria, jigger, dysentery and man eating lions³⁴.

The man-eating lions of the Tsavo were a problem to both railway workers and the businessmen. In 1898 Ujjah Singh, a railway foreman, working under railway engineer, Patterson, was killed by a lion which got him out of the tent while asleep.³⁵ The lions often restricted railway staff in their houses from morning to evening. In December 1898, the man-eating lions brought the construction of the Railway to a standstill for about three weeks. The railway workers (coolies) came to believe that man eaters were not Lions but

.....angry spirits of two departed native chiefs (who) had taken this form in order to protest against a Railway being made through their country, and by stopping its progress to avenge the insults thus shown to them³⁶

Much as Patterson did not believe that theory he however did not understand how beasts got into the Indian homesteads secretly without notice;

How they (Lions) forced their way through the bomas without making any noise was and still is a mystery to me, I Should have thought that it was next to impossible for an animal to get through at all³⁷.

With regard to transport, though the Sikhs countered by using human and animal drawn carts but they did not avoid delay. The Indian primitive transport system and business techniques formerly used in India was also engaged.³⁸ It involved movement from one village to the other, the Sikh businessmen went into the interior of East Africa Protectorate closer to the clients, for example in the Maasai areas. The porters traveled long distances of up to 600 miles occasionally, it took porters up to two months of walking from the East Coast to the interior. Before the mechanical road transport was introduced the rickshaws were used. Many of the rickshaws of the pioneer days were built and owned by the Sikhs.³⁹ Isher Singh owned and carried out rickshaw business.

Bhagat Singh who came to East Africa Protectorate in 1898, established the business of making animal drawn carts. He sold carts throughout East Africa Protectorate⁴⁰. The introduction of this new means of transport linked up the interior to major centres served by the railway. This contributed to economic success of the Sikhs, interestingly where the company (IBEA) had failed. The colonial government succeeded by putting in place trade protective measures, including financing from England.⁴¹ The IBEA, had partly failed, as a result of poor financial policy, poor farming practices, poor transport and poor trade network. The Sikhs' for that matter undertook a complementary role in the sustenance of the colonial economy.

Besides the Sikhs who came as indentured labour there were those who came to East Africa Protectorate on their own without necessarily exhausting the official requirement of immigration. They sneaked from India to IBEA. This was continued after 1903. Following the completion, of the railway, Sikhs who went back home talked of job opportunities, business avenues and existence of large unoccupied land abroad. Consequently the Sikhs who came were target oriented, some came to be employed as subordinate staff⁴² in the government, others to get land for agriculture, open up business, still others came to join their relatives and friends as they awaited for employment avenues. Many of the Sikhs who came got employed in various government departments, in the railway, the public works department, the power and lighting, posts and telecommunication. Others were employed as artisans, surveyors, hospital assistants including compounders⁴³ up to 1939 Sikhs build carts which they used to collect cabbage. Though the number of Sikhs who came privately or worked as subordinate staff is not explicitly known the general trend of the subordinate staff from India had an upward trend.

The construction of the railway and general improvements in communication in East Africa Protectorate, more specifically construction of feeder roads enhanced the influx of Sikh emigrants.⁴⁴ They came to venture into business opportunities which had been

occasioned by the railway construction. The businessmen entered the interior along the railway lines and established trading posts in a similar way at fortified posts and urban centres, at Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret, Kitale including in the Masai land, Mazras, Machakos, Ngong and Fort Smith. Other Sikhs were employed as part of the troops maintained peace, law and order, and guarded the trading posts. In the interior of East Africa Protectorate, Sikhs established business in shanty railway centres, purchased Africans produce from the surrounding communities. The Sikh commercial class also brought on the market new products. As contractors, Sikhs took an active role in the transformation of the shanty railway centres into major urban centers. Gurdit Singh who came to East Africa Protectorate built and owned the present Kipande House, at Nairobi. Following changes in demand, the Sikhs equally adopted themselves to the demands of the new environment, at the apex of which they became engineers, technicians and electricians⁴⁵ turners, makers of boilers, exhaust pipes and vehicle body builders.

In addition to animal drawn carts, the years 1916 and 1918, the Sikhs went to their clients by bicycles. This was further improved in 1920's following the introduction and use of motor transport. It eased and influenced the opening up of new avenues of business in areas that previously could not be reached because they were far away in the interior. Equally important was the accompanying workshop kind of jobs, for example motor mechanic, including garage services. The businessmen connected the interior and the small urban centres brought to the market more hide and skin, particularly following the use of lorry transport, which gradually connected major cities, Nairobi and Mombasa and the emerging railway shanty centres. From 1922 to 1927, the economic performance of the Sikhs like that of the colonial government was sound as was characterised by improved purchasing power and buying centres. The businessmen sold more than before.

Unlike other Indian's businesses, the Sikhs' occupations, workshops carpentry, masonry and even construction, could not be undertaken without African personnel. This

was enhanced following improvement in business and need to reach more clients which made the Sikhs to employ African personnel as their business assistants either in the shop or as helping hand at the construction site or in workshops. With passage of time, the Africans who worked together with Sikh firms also acquired skills and some became masons, carpenters, later mechanics and contractors. The Sikhs' economic intermediary role also facilitated African/European business linkage and connected the country to the international trade.⁴⁶ In the initial stages, though the linkage had negative impact as a result international competition, however the message of this connection had been relayed. That economic success lay in the production of competitive products. Quality other than quantity became the basis of production.

A pioneer Sikh businessman whose initiative and impact in Kenya was widely felt, and whose name became synonymous to Sikhs was Sardar Kala Singh. His name 'Kala Singh' became 'Kalasingha' to the Africans, a 'Kiswahili' dialect, and for all practical purposes became synonymous to 'Sikhs' as distinct from other Indians. Kala Singh was born in 1896. He came to East Africa protectorate in 1912, at the age of 16 years. Like many Sikhs, Kala Singh was, employed by the railway, before he engaged private business, with his partner Munshiram. They established a trade company under the names 'Munishiram Kala Singh and Company.' Kala Singh traveled to the Maasai area and opened modern business at the time when it was a jungle. His business abilities were reflected in the fame the name acquired. Kala Singh, having traveled earlier and more often, than any other member of his co-religious group partly, made his name become descriptive of all Sikhs.⁴⁷ This included his adventurous working abilities.

By 1934, Sikhs had penetrated the Maasai, set up a temple and were trading on donkey backs. As earlier mentioned, the Sikhs partly ensured the success of their business by getting married to Maasai women. This was enhanced by the Sikhs' doctrinal teachings that did not uphold caste, and instead, emphasised equality of humanity and adventure. Sikh men

were similarly prompted by lack of Sikh women, hence intermarried with African women, not only in the Maasai⁴⁸ but also in Meru where they led to the emergence of Afro-Sikhs who also became businessmen (seen in Ch.1).

At Eldoret there was Bur Singh. He was born in 1867 at Jullunder India and in 1911 came in Kenya. He initiated and played part in the construction of a Sikh temple at Eldoret, and remained the leader of the temple for about thirty years. Besides religious life, Bur Singh like many other Sikhs, worked on Uganda railway before joining a partner. The two started a construction firm in 1919.⁴⁹

The Sikhs' service to the colonial society was explicit from an extract of a list of the members of the pioneer Sikh Union. The list had 136 members and their occupations are given,

Barrister at law -	1.36	Electricians	5.44
Medical Practitioner	1.36	Carpenters	17.68
Merchants	17.67	Motor Mechanics	4.08
Contractors	8.16	Mechanics	5.44
Cabinet makers	5.44	Plumbers	2.72
Teachers	4.08	Masons	2.72
Clerks	46.24	Tailors	2.72
Mistry	8.16	Engine Driver	1.36
Police sub-inspectors	2.72	Sign Painter	1.36
Shop Assistants	2.72	Cushion makers	4.08
Traders	31.6	Shed man	1.36
Sub-Overseer	1.36	Firemen	2.72

The list reflected that the Sikhs were predominantly clerks, traders, merchants and carpenters and very few professionals⁵⁰. The other observable characteristic was their tending towards skill oriented jobs.

Unlike other Indian emigrant communities resident in colonial Kenya, the Sikhs were among the first Indian community in 1903 to take up farming at Kibos, an area, whose altitude was described as not within the coveted white highlands.⁵¹ In India Sikhs were farmers. Their state Punjab is up to date, the 'wheat bowl' of India.⁵² In Kenya the Sikhs displayed their agricultural orientation, however this did not merge their impact India. Kibos, was a quagmire, a mosquito infested area. The pioneer Sikh farmers with their agrarian

ability achieved, high production prompting the colonial government to contemplate expanding the settlement in 1905.⁵³ By 1928, Kibos settlement had 48 farmers with two hundred acres of land under cultivation. The Kibos settlement produced sugar cane chilies, and animal products. In the beginning Kibos farmers were given financial and technical assistance regarding the planting of cotton, sesame, linseed and sugarcane.⁵⁴ However, with passage of time the colonial government stopped further financial⁵⁵ assistance to the Kibos farmers resulting to loss of morale. Other factors which discouraged the Kibos farmers included the hostile climatic conditions, colonial government's policy' which restricted certain crops, to the white settlers and the continued restriction of the farmers within the low land Kibos without prospects of getting to the white highlands. In spite of the problems the Kibos farmers set in motion an economic venture that survived over turbulent conditions from 1910 to the present time. The Miwan Sugar Factory was started early 20th century. The farmers put up to 40,000 acres of land under agriculture. Farming which was initially manual was mechanized to meet the then increasing demand for sugar cane.

Just before independence, a number of Sikhs also displayed their agriculture orientation and bought land from the departing white settlers who were leaving Kenya. Most of them were Jat Sikhs whose attachment on land had traditional bearing.⁵⁶ the Lochab brothers and Rai Singh, both at Eldoret have land acquired after 1950. The former are large scale wheat farmers at Narok. Apart from agriculture the two families are industrialists. Rai Singh has a timber factory that gives a wide range of timber products mainly block board. The Lochab brothers are mainly transporters. They are also owners of Steel Mill factory at Eldoret. The two families are household names in Eldoret town.

Jat Sikhs in India were farmers while the Ramgarhia were traditionally artisans. In Kenya, however, the strict observation of caste allocation of jobs was not strictly followed. It was possible to find a Ramgarhia or a Jat partake duties interchangeably.⁵⁷ In essence, the changing economic trends amongst Sikhs affected their social fabric in choice of career. For

example, prior to the introduction of water borne sanitation system in Nairobi the Sikhs, liberated from casteism effected the cleanliness of Nairobi. With passage of time, however Africans gradually took up the duties of sanitation.⁵⁸

3.1 The Determinants of Sikhs' Economic Trends and Impact in Kenya (1914-1963)

The Sikhs' economic role in Kenya was not delinked from global economic trends or the general colonial economy. Its behaviour and impact was affected and patterned by the general global trends, though it depicted some autonomy. This gave rise to four major characteristics of Sikhs' economic trends in Kenya.

1. The impact of the First World War on the Sikhs' economic performance.
2. The effect of economic depression of 1920 and 1930.
3. Sikhs' economic behaviour during the second world war period.
4. Sikhs' economic performance after the second world war period.

During the first world war the Sikhs economic role and impact was distanced from them(Sikhs) and hijacked by the war situation which in turn disrupted the economic flow. The Imperial government during the war withdrew attention from economic growth to the threat, which had been created by the war. Before the war, from 1905, there was great British overseas investment and by 1914, it had reached unprecedented level. The Sikhs business community as earlier mentioned, had moved into the interior along the Railway to exploit economic avenues which had come with the railway. The Sikhs' economic stability, as a community was, depicted by both the construction and re-construction of temples. At Mombasa for example Sikhs who had constructed a small temple, later purchased land and constructed a more spacious Gurudwara. They eventually added a school and guest house⁵⁹. This was also true with Sikhs at Nairobi. At first they constructed a tent in 1899 and later established a stone building in 1911. The Sikhs at Kisumu notably Babu Didar Singh Sandhu, Sardar Kehar Singh, Jagat Singh, Kala Singh, and Babu Ram built the Sikh temple.

Construction started in 1909 and was completed just, before World War I.⁶⁰ Prior to the war the aggregate wealth of the Sikhs and other Indians was higher than that of the Europeans⁶¹. However that of the Sikhs, compared to other Indians was low because not many Sikhs engaged business which earned them quick and massive wealth. This situation persisted for a long time.⁶²

one of the reason is that very few Sikhs indeed have found it congenial to engage in some of those forms of trade which have been productive of massive wealth

After the war broke out on August 14, 1914, the German forces entered Kenya up to Kajiado, Kisii and Voi. The colonial government in conjunction with Imperial government imported 46000⁶³ Indian soldiers whose constituent was mostly Sikhs. In all 136,000 Sikhs helped the British to fight the Germans not only in Africa but also abroad. There was evidence which showed, that, the Sikhs economic role was tied to the colonial economy and distanced from them (Sikhs). It was underlined in the economic limbo which befell their economic role as a result of the impact the world war had on the colonial economy⁶⁴. The effect of World War I was accompanied by suffering of the economy, apart from loss of life. There was limited export trade. As a result the economy dwindled by about 500%. This affected European financing institutions which, withdrew their financial support, partly because, they were not sure of the likely aftermath of the war. The colonial economy, during the war, was characterised by increase of price particularly, of essential products like foodstuffs. The survival of the business community depended on shrewdness, industry, thrift and family coherence. Among the Sikhs, like the general colonial economy, this period was not marked by any major economic activity, up to 1920 economic recession.

The recession marked a drop in sterling pound. The effort by the government to eradicate the economy resulted into heavy in-put which in turn affected the already dwindling economy. During the recession, the prices of coffee, sisal and flax dropped by a significant margin. Coffee for example, fell from £180 at the start of 1920 to about £60, while sisal fell from £96 to £12 a ton. Sikhs' economic impact, during this period, lay in their ability to go

into the interior by use of bicycles and animal drawn carts.

From 1921 and after, the Sikhs economic role, like that of the general colony was tied together. After 1921, the economy depicted improvement. The Sikh community at Kisumu established a school, which they leased to the government in 1926.⁶⁵ At Mombasa the Sikh community partly, depicting economic stability constructed a guesthouse comprising of eleven rooms in the same period⁶⁶. The introduction of lorry transport improved local transport this was important to the businessmen because they could transport more goods. European firms for example Dalgetys, Mitchell Cotts, Leslie and Anderson engaged in oriental and Australia trade. They offered skilled commercial and financial assistance. The white financiers were partly sure of political stability, they thus freely gave loans to the willing Sikh businessmen, whose investment was indirectly relayed to the Africans who did not qualify for direct financing from the European firms. Africans neither had security, nor were they considered competent enough to transact business to warrant them loans. In 1922 the Railway transport became more cheap and efficient. It was placed under autonomous administration of Kenya and Uganda⁶⁷. The general improvement in transport led to opening up of new markets in 1922/23. The oxen drawn carts and bicycles linked the lorries to the remote parts that could not be reached by the lorries. This was marked by extension of Railway net-work to Nyeri, Thompson Falls, Solai, Kitale and extension from Kisumu to Butere.⁶⁸ Except 1928 the improved economic stability persisted up to 1929. In 1928, the locusts destroyed crops. Unfortunately the business community, driven by the desire to accrue profit increased stocking of goods which in certain incidences led to overstocking. The Sikhs economic, role like that of colonial economy indicated growth. The revenue of the colonial economy doubled from £1.64 million in 1922 to £2.41 million in 1925 and £3.33 million in 1929.

Towards the end of 1929, the economy started to shatter, and in 1930 the economic depression was in full force. This accelerated economic disaster for Kenya that had started

earlier in 1928, when locusts destroyed crops. Like 1920, the 1930 economic recession was characterised by loss in commodity price, loss of demand for imports and curtailment of credits. The value of coffee dropped by more than a half and sisal went down by more than 2/3. The prices of hides, ghee, beans and simsim dropped. The financial institutions were equally affected by the depression to the extent that they could not disburse loans to the Sikhs as was the case applied to other Indians. The government's effort to salvage the situation resulted in labour retrenchment, thus creating unemployment to the Sikhs most of them worked in the government. The reduction in wages, led to the formation of labour protest associations, for example the Protective Society of Kenya on January 4, 1931. Its leaders were President Purdhan Gujjah Singh, Secretary Bhagant Singh Viridi and Isher Singh. Between 1931 and 1934 there was yet another disastrous drought.

Partly, due to harsh economic situation of early 1930's and the capitalists need for accumulation of profits forced the businessmen to engage in unethical business tricks in order to make more profits. About 45% of the Sikhs had become business people.⁶⁹ Unethical business behaviour was implicit in the colonial government's legal measures taken in 1934 against the unscrupulous capitalists.⁷⁰ These policies equally displaced the Sikhs' economic operations. In mid 1930 the Colonial government on grounds of non payment of labourers blacklisted Labh Singh, Mulisha Singh, Udham Singh against entering any contract with the government or municipal council to recruit labour.⁷¹ By 1934 the colonial government instituted price control measures and reduced the buying centres. The identification of Sikhs with other Indians and the association of Indians with corruption, became the basis of African/Indian economic mistrust, which more often than not was expressed in hostility. This state of affairs trickled down from colonial to post colonial Kenya. By 1934 regulation, the colonial government established private markets which in effect ruined the Indian trading centres including that of the Sikhs.⁷² Within the same period the government controlled prices, weights and measures including the quality⁷³ of

commodities. Consequently, African produce could be sold on organised markets. These wavered trade from shopkeepers and itinerant merchant who previously controlled bulk of trade.

The colonial government's policies of 1934 affected the Sikh business community because they interfered with the free interplay of market forces, and facilitated the monopoly of the economy by European firms for example Kenya Farmers Association, Gibson and company, and Prem chard Reichard. Therefore, the weaker Sikh traders were forced out of business. The fiscal policy entailing the protective custom duties, railway freight rates for agricultural products, including subsidies to farmers, favoured the European agricultural interests.⁷⁴ Many Sikhs were not agriculturists.

There was a general recovery of the colonial economy in 1935 and 1937, however the legacies of 1934 Regulation watered down its full impact. Similarly, despite the fact that the general colonial economic trends 1935 and 1937 was characterised by high demand and increased prices, particularly, for goods which had been in less supply, its impact to the Sikh business community was low. This was until the second World War period of 1939 to 1945. That was, when its aftermath was marked by an economic boom, unfortunately by exploitation. The Sikhs economic accumulation, between 1931 and 1939 was witnessed in their establishment of the religious centres at Nyeri and Nanyuki in 1933⁷⁵ and at Thika. At Magadi Sikhs established the temple in 1937.⁷⁶

The second World War period was characterised by high demand for scarce essential products. There was food shortages and hoarding. They resulted partly from the colonial government's transfer of attention to external threat and failure to enforce economic laws. During this period the colonial government increased the price of maize in order to encourage farmers to produce more to meet supplies for the war and for self-sufficiency. In the process the non-agricultural Sikh community suffered immensely at the hands of European agriculturists. Sikhs in government service were affected by static salaries and

were worse off than their counterparts in business, who shared in the strategy that Kenya acquired as a substitute Sea route. During the war Kenya, became a link of the British to the Middle and Far East. The British, thus, used Kenya as a springboard to counter the threat posed by the Italians who were in Somalia and to safeguard their interests on the Asian continent. As a result, there were many British soldiers, who also gave demand for food and services. The Sikh businessmen profited from trade protectionism which included tariffs, the import duty concession, loan subsidies and licensing. The enterprising Sikhs used the opportunity accorded during the Second World War period to diversify their business. More specifically, some moved into manufacturing sector of the economy, hotel and catering industries, transport, insurance, construction, engineering and mechanical works, including artisonry, carpentry, and masonry.

After the war, the Sikh business community also got a share in capital accrued from Kenya's participation in the reconstruction of the devastated Europe.⁷⁷ They too benefited from the Africans' rural-urban migration as Africans at this time went to the cities in search of jobs. The Sikhs benefited in two ways, first from the increased market for consumables which increased in the process of the migration and secondly, the migration offered cheap labour to the Sikh firms for example workshops, engineering firms, in construction and emerging manufacturing firms. The Sikh business class similarly benefited from the underground markets that emerged as a result of price control. These illegal markets increased after the start of the war because the colonial government could not effectively enforce control measures. The colonial government still recuperating from the war did not significantly enforce change in the economic structures, which she had inherited from the second World War situation. There was marked improvement of infrastructure starting from 1920's, (in the period 1922 and 1929 the expenditure on public works increased from £206,000 to £520,000 in 1929. Improvement of communication was marked by reduction of transport cost) by the second, World War period it was further improved so that businessmen

could access the interior of Kenya. As earlier mentioned, the Sikhs unlike the Africans had an advantage of obtaining loans from either the British, Dutch and/or Indian Banks. British financial institutions had an allowance for Sikhs as other Indians to get over-draft.

There was a marked increase of Sikhs in private sector, which had started earlier, after the completion of the railway. Sikhs had established laundry business, for Kushal Singh, Ram Singh and Sons started photographic studio, Bir Singh started restaurant business.⁷⁸ Overall, however, the Sikhs main economic ventures where they excelled was skill oriented, more specifically construction work, cabinet making, carpentry, mechanic, plumber work, masonry and engine driving including cushion making. By 1948 many Sikhs had become builders and of 82.2% of the builders, many were Sikhs.⁷⁹

In 1950 the violent nationalistic movement in Kenya affected the commercial sector. During this period the African nationalists under a secret and violent movement "Mau Mau" targeted Indians and Europeans. In October 1952, the colonial government declared the State of Emergency. As a result Sikhs as many Indians had to close down their business⁸⁰ particularly in central parts of Kenya. Closer to political turbulent in early 1950's was the economic recession of 1955. It was characterised by drop in Gross Domestic Product, recorded at 7.1 in 1954. The recession working side by side with political upheavals enhanced the state of economic instability. The racist sentiments at that time expressed by the African nationalists, was associated with terror, unleashed against the Indian community, this scared off the business community. It was marked by Sikh exodus from Kenya, some moved to Uganda, while a higher percentage went to Canada, USA, UK and Australia.⁸¹

The Sikhs' economic growth after the second World War was similarly, associated with the renovation and or construction of magnificent temples, for example, at Makindu. In 1946 the Ramgarhia Sikhs constructed Ramgarhia Mansion, consisting of three storey shops, dispensary, dental clinic and flats. Between 1953 and 1957 the Sikhs at Mombasa built a guesthouse to replace the old building constructed in 1937. The new guesthouse had twenty-

four rooms with amenities for boarding. At Nairobi, Sikhs depicting the economic growth set the foundation for a magnificent temple, consisting of a congregational hall, measuring 100 by 100 feet, two storey block building, flats for priests, committee rooms, offices, library, Kitchen and rest house.

The Sikhs' economic role was coupled with turbulence. Having come as indentured labour, the Sikhs depicted their sacrifice and hard work by moving up the economic ladder. They had to spend their time in the remote parts of Kenya in order to transact business. Their love for manual work, their belief in working harder in order to live well, and help the needy⁸² their willingness to co-operate within family confines as a business unit, their adventurous attributes and their ability to adopt to any environment, were push factors to their economic struggles. In Kenya as England, the Sikhs were equally economically successful. They worked hard, made savings and invested in their native village of Punjab, with intentions of returning to their homeland after they had earned enough.⁸³ It was, from this premise that the Sikhs deny the dire condemnation of Indians as having exploited Africans. Sikhs were of the view that they did not come to dominate the economy.

A Sikh businessman whose business traversed various economic depressions beginning the 1930's up to and including in the independent East African state was Indar Singh Gill. He started as a railway employee and later established an economic empire in East Africa

Indar Singh Gill was born in Jandiali, Punjab India on May 9, 1901. His mother died at his birth and was brought up by his maternal uncle and aunt. As an orphan his childhood shaped him and influenced his future career. Unlike many Sikhs who migrated to East Africa Protectorate, Indar Singh Gill had better education. He had passed the 8th class graduated as a teacher and taught at his village before migrating to Kenya in 1922. Prior to his coming, Indar Singh had yearned to work on the railway, this ambition was achieved when he was employed in September 1922 as a trainee telegraphist at a salary of Sh. 20/= per month. In

November the same year, Gill was elevated to the post of Signaler while at Njoro station in Kenya. Within a period of four years Gill worked at various stations in Kenya. In 1926, he was transferred to Uganda and posted at Mutai, Luzinga and Nsinzi where he worked as a stationmaster.

In 1932, Gill, without the knowledge of his employer, ventured into private business. In the same year, he purchased land at Busoga in Uganda, started to grow sugar cane, maize and coffee. Three years later established Sikh Saw Mills.⁸⁴ Gill specialised in production of timber and furniture from podo 'Mvule'. His prospects bettered when he secured concession from the colonial government to fell trees. In the first month, timber earned him £750 after a year, the returns doubled, and his company began to fell 300 trees a month. Meanwhile when the railway authorities came to learn of his involvement with private business had him laid off.

In 1940, Gill diversified his business, purchased a cotton ginnery in Jinja, and changed the name of the company to 'Saw Millers and Ginners' reflecting the expansion of the business. In 1943, Gill expanded his business to Tanzania, bought a second ginnery at Naasa, Mwanza. In the same year, he purchased a sawmill in Kenya at Burnt Forest, Ainabkoi. Four years later, he purchased a large parcel of land in Eastern Usambara at Bulwa in Tanzania and started saw milling and Tea farming. He constructed a tea factory in 1962. At Nairobi Indar Singh Gill built a magnificent multi-storey building, named after him 'Gill House'. At first, it housed the office of income tax and education department. Gill House now houses various offices including colleges and it is a landmark of Sikhs contribution in the growth of urban centres in Kenya. Other purchases of Indar Singh Gill included cinema halls, Oil mills, motor vehicle, furniture and joinery works, civil engineering and building construction works. In 1953 Indar Gill sold the ginnery and established a timber impregnating plant in Uganda for drying kilns. In 1959 Gill established plywood and veneer factory. This was situated at Jinja Uganda, followed with a plywood factory at Tanga and

Moshi. Gill was the first to set safety matches manufacturing factory at Jinja.

The regional expansion of business in East Africa earned Gill both dividends and losses. The land Indar Singh acquired in late 1950's on formerly 'Liverpool Road' now Likoni Road at Nairobi salvaged Gill's family after they lost all that they had in Uganda to Idi Amin in 1973.⁸⁵ Gill's property in Tanzania was sold to a government parastatal.

As a true Sikh who had worked hard and acquired property, Indar Singh Gill was a philanthropist, made donations to schools, hospitals and religious institutions.⁸⁶ Indar Gill's philanthropy was emulated by his son Balbinder Gill Singh (the only son of the Indar Singh Gill). During his time Indar Singh Gill, as a true Sikh, tolerated other religions. This was explicit in his donations to churches, mosques and temples. He started a bursary fund, which has made considerable contribution in educating a cross section of students, abroad and locally regardless of their religion, race or creed.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the economic role of the Sikhs had its negative aspects. The Sikh business community used intermediary position to enrich themselves, as they appropriated profits. Though Sikhism repudiates acquisition of property unfairly, as anti-Sikhism, there were cases where capitalistic attributes overran the religious norms. A Sikh historian (scholar in India) objected to charging Sikhs abroad based on Sikhs' code of conduct. He argued that, the Sikh migrants were economy driven and were not solely (entirely) religious.⁸⁸ The Sikhs who migrated to England were equally driven by economic gains. They were attracted to England by higher salaries and economic avenues. Sikhs' as earlier mentioned, unlike the Hindus, were free from caste traditions that prohibited, for example, the Hindus from free mobility and wider interaction with people outside their caste. Sikhs who came to East Africa protectorate were equally attracted by economic gains, more specifically high earnings abroad than in India.

Despite the fact that Sikhs were economically driven, there was no clear-cut distinction between the secular and religious. Sikhism permeates the entire life of the

followers, such that activities which went outside Sikhs code of behaviour was a reflection to their faith, a discrepancy between what was taught and done in real life situation. From the start of twentieth century, Europeans dreaded the Indian's business manoeuvres without exonerate Sikhs.

'The East Africa and Uganda Mail' of January 31, 1903¹⁹ and that of February²⁰ the same year, made reference to Indians' unethical business practices ('Indians' referred to all people from the Indian sub-continent be it Hindus or Sikhs). In January 1903, the Editor pointed out, "Indians are alas", too often the means of ruining the local trade", on February 1903, the editor cautioned European employers against employing Asiatics and instead employ Europeans. Though it was true, that from the beginning, the European settlers were driven by racial sentiments to stop Asian immigration from coming, to East Africa protectorate, however, still this did not rule out the capitalistic tendencies that businessmen engage into in order to obtain maximum profit. Africans in the colonial economy were the disadvantaged lot because not many of them understood capitalistic business practices. In 1934, as mentioned earlier, the colonial government partly dissatisfied with the Indian economic practices and in pursuance of racial economic regulation instituted regulation to protect non business community. The government set up special market with exclusive licenses, for the purchase of certain commodities. This was intended to curb the Indian exploitative intermediary's role, where Sikhs were a party²¹. The Second World War period, was marked by Sikhs' major economic growth. This coincided with complaints that the business community of the Indian origin took advantage of the situation to hoard and overcharge.²² During the second World War a wife of a white soldier left behind in the colony blamed Indian business community for unethical business engagements. She recommended imprisonment of the Indian businessmen for overcharging. In 1944, though with manifest of racial prejudice which characterised Kenya's colonial society but the point was brought out. There was fear expressed over the continued accumulation of profits by the

Indian business community⁹³ amongst, were Sikhs.

Despite the fact that, there were racist outbursts, there was imputation of profiteering and unfair practices that involved the Sikhs. In the event distanced the Sikhs from their religious norm of decision making process. Sikhism upheld the means applied in acquisition of property instead of the end justifying the means.⁹⁴ Thus, under stiff capitalistic influence, Sikhs religions morals were paralysed by the competitive economic environment and paved way for exploitation.

The confinement of the Sikhs within their kinship business ties, though it earned them dividends during the second World War period it also raised suspicion and hatred from Africans. The Sikhs, like other Indians contacted their business along family ties and, were accused of exploitation in their business transactions because of remaining closed. Although the Sikhs interacted with Africans more often than other Indians did, like the Hindu community who held casteism their relationship was not intimate. It was, limited at employer/employee without social attachment. The Sikhs were influenced by interpersonal, religious and racial consideration in price negotiations and determination⁹⁵ hence it became a source of racial friction. There was easy and amicable co-existence of the Sikhs and other Indians in business transactions. This was, based on, the kinship ties, common ancestry, common geographical origin and solidarity that the Sikhs and other Indians acquired as an emigrant race. This was, because of the hostility unleashed to the Sikhs by both the Africans and Europeans as Indians.⁹⁶ The result of this business interaction amongst the Sikhs and other Indians, particularly at the time of independence and after, was that, it lacked national outlook. The situation in subsequent years, blew out of proportion, whereby Sikhs, in their insecure state acquired money quickly and migrated taking with them money.⁹⁷

The racist political and economic policies put the Sikhs' in their economic position and thus determined and shaped their impact in Kenya. The colonial government institutionalised divide and rule policy that set in racial rivalry also whetted by economic

gains. The colonial policies confined the Sikhs together with other Indians in economic realm, geographical and administrative position. Sikhs were restricted to a middle administrative rank between the whites at the helm and Africans at the base, in public, police including military sector. This arrangement made them be perceived by the Africans as not significantly different to other Indians and as aides to colonialists. Thus, the racial hierarchical arrangement of colonial economy deflected the Sikhs' economic role in the colonial Kenya and made it a cause of racial antipathy.

The colonial government denied the Sikhs like other immigrant communities from the Indian sub continent access to land through the enactment of 1902 and 1915 land ordinances and complete legal recognition of white highlands in 1939 (see chapter 4). The Sikhs, as earlier mentioned, unlike other Indian communities like the Gujaratis who were business oriented, had come from agriculture environment. Thus the ordinances, that forced them to become alienated urban dwellers amongst other Indians, affected them more than non-agricultural Indian community. The ordinances forced them to become urban dwellers interacting with Africans at business level, as customer and client. The Sikhs settlement pattern coupled by imagined insecurity posed by the Africans at the time of nationalistic struggle (see chapter 4) united the Sikhs and other Indians making it a distinct economic community, and accordingly indistinguishable from other Indians apart from their external symbols.

The close interaction between the Sikhs and other Indians enhanced their solidarity with each other. The Sikh lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, contractors, architects, mechanics, had their clients from other Indians who came from the Indian sub-continent, thus reinforcing their identity³⁸ based on inherent mutual co-existence. As mentioned earlier, given the nature of their vocation, Sikhs constantly interacted, more with Africans as their sub-ordinates. Meanwhile compared to the Hindus, Sikhs interacted more freely with the Africans. This was contributed by the Sikhs inclination for alcohol and where they met with

Africans in same pubs. The Sikhs unlike the Hindus had no taboos because of interacting with other people outside their caste.”

However, this did not rule out the Sikhs’ hard working attributes, witnessed among the Sikhs. Punjab for example, has the highest per capita income¹⁰⁰, which they have maintained over generations. The most recent statistics of 1980 and 1986 gives the same results.

YEAR	PER CAPITA INCOME	
	PUNJAB STATE	INDIA
1980 – 1981	RS. 2,620	RS 1627
1985 – 1986	RS. 4,536	RS 2721

Sikhs in India constitute 2% of the population nevertheless they, transformed the Punjab into the breadbasket of India. They sustained both green and white revolutions.¹⁰¹ In India, though the Punjab State and that of Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, share climatic condition the Punjab is more prosperous. Sikhs’ thus proved the synthesis that the human element was important in development. Sikhs similarly, went along way to prove that development was not a self- generating process, without application of human skill. In India the Sikhs:

..... are unlike other people, e.g. people of Bihar, who would not repair their wells and “Ahars” and let their crop wither for want of water while awaiting for the government to dig out canals, or farmers in Andhra Pradesh who would not make use of additional irrigation water to increase their production because of apathy and indolence. They are also, unlike, Bihar Brahman, “land owners”, who would not plough and work on land on account of entrenched caste biases, resulting in farmers efficiency. In sharp contrast to farmers of Andhra Pradesh who hardly are able to get one full meal a day and who often attribute the poor yields to their fate “karma” the farmers of Punjab consider themselves as master of their own destiny.^{102b}

The Sikhs’ hard working attributes in Kenya like in India are inherent in their culture. Sikh religion demands that Sikhs live on their own labour and keep away from begging. Besides their faith in God, they equally have faith in manual labour, sanctified by the founder Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak tilled the soil at Kartarpur. Guru Angad carried heavy loads as an attendant of Guru Nanak. Gurus Amar Das and Ram Das equally displayed their love for

manual labour¹⁰³. Traditionally, the Sikhs have sayings that emphasises hard work as a means to hit targets, for example '*Munn yaar Naal, hath Kuar Nal*' the saying demands that the Sikhs be creative and do productive work to fulfill their mission, along with the spiritual¹⁰⁴. A saying with similar message '*Dab ke wah rajh ke khah*' (work hard in the field and be prosperous)¹⁰⁵.

In Kenya the Sikhs economic role permeated all sectors of the economy and profession. In a tabular form the Sikhs occupational constitutions were as follows.

INITIAL SIKHS OCCUPATIONS IN KENYA¹⁰⁶

OCCUPATION	PERCENTAGE
Carpenter	23
Mechanical/Fitter/	22
Electricians	6
Clerks	6
Teachers	6
Army Service	3
Masons	3
Transport	3
Labourers	3
Supervisors	2
Cushion Makers	2
Technicians	2
Black Smiths	2
Others (Watch makers, assistant, Police Inspectors, Photographers, Lines men, Telegraphists, Foremen, etc.	11
To include on the list were merchants contractors, traders, plumbers, masons, tailors, and engine drivers.	

After 1960 Sikhs owned many private firms. This included, Labh Singh, Haban Singh were, bus and coach body builders, Bir Singh and company were, general contractors, sand and ballast suppliers, master joiners, carpenters, masons, plumbers, painters, Electricians, fitters, floor laying specialists builders and contractors. Santokh Singh Pansar and sons, were makers of cold rooms and furniture.¹⁰⁷ By 1962 the Sikhs who numbered over 20,000 were mechanics, importers of spare parts and cars, businessmen, carpenters and railway men. Other Asians, for example, Hindus numbered over 97,000, were traders,

government officials, craftsmen and businessmen. While Moslems were teachers, professionals, traders, and plantation owners. The Goans were professionals and clerks.

At the time of Independence 1963 and after, the economic priority of the Sikhs was threatened by the policies of Africanisation and the anti-Asian slogans. The Government's prime aim at the time of Independence was to empower Africans to take up business so that they could take part in sector previously dominated by the whites and Asians. This scared a fraction of Sikh entrepreneur who emigrated, to countries like UK, Canada and USA. There was no evidence to indicate that a significant number of Sikhs went back to India.¹⁰⁸ Many Sikhs, however, remained in Kenya. Those who went to Uganda were, later forced out by Idi Amin in 1975.

The process of Africanisation propounded by African nationalists like Tom Mboya (trade unionists during colonial time) was later institutionalised under the Trade Licensing act of 1967. The act stipulated that no person other than a Kenyan citizen was, allowed to conduct business in any place outside general business area in unspecified goods.¹⁰⁹ The regulation closed out the Sikhs business expectation in rural areas. And left them within major cities, Nairobi and Mombasa and a few cities scattered in the up-country towns. The government's institutionalisation of ICDC (Industrial and Commercial Development Co-operation) was to ensure the successful implementation of Africanisation.

Sikhs who remained in Kenya, after independence were provoked to work harder to cope with the post-colonial policies. The Sikhs' economic situation in Kenya at the time of independence and after more specifically 1967 could be seen within same premises with Sikhs situation in 1947 India.¹¹⁰ In that year, the Sikhs economic life was disrupted by partition of India into Pakistan and India. It was characterised by an exodus of the Sikhs from West Punjab to East Punjab. Though, the Sikhs left behind a lot of wealth they quickly utilised small pieces of land allotted to them as compensation of what they had left in West Punjab, to support their population. The Historical, religious and cultural background

endowed the Sikhs with the spirit of Adventure, and a capacity, to turn the worst circumstances to their advantage.¹¹¹ Indarjit Singh described the Sikhs adventure and creativity with regard to 1947 India as :-

Rather than languish in despair, the intrepid people set out to find fresh pastures in extremely inaccessible parts of the country, or in environment inhospitable to them to start with. They also started opening up, through road transport inaccessible and difficult routes in the country. The truck driver of the community became a familiar sight in unfamiliar and unopened countryside in almost all states in northern and central parts of the country"¹¹².

Thus the Sikhs made an impact in Kenya's economy. As many people from the Indian sub-continent were engaged in shopkeeping the Sikhs complemented by venturing into artisanry. They were prominent owners of subsidiary industries engineering, workshops, and motor lorry body builders. Consequently, much as they appeared closer to other Indians, their role was complementary. Equally worth mentioning, the Sikhs economic role was tied to the colonial government's economic behaviour. This association tended to taint Sikhs role to appear one and the same with the colonial economy.

END NOTES

1. Population census 1962 (non-African population) Vol.4 (NRBI statistical data Division 1966) p5.
2. Census of Kenya 1911(NRBI GVT printer 1912) Report on non-native census remuneration made in the protectorate and Colony of Kenya 1926, (NRBI GVT printer 1927) p52. Kenya Population census 1962 (non-African population) Vol.4 (NRBI statistical data Division 1966) p5.
3. Narain Singh ed. 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi opening ceremony of new Sikh Temple Gurudwara 494th Birth Anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Devji Maharaj' p34.
4. F.O 2/117, F.O 2/143 and F.O 2/170.
5. The Charter No.10 (London 1888) C. 5603.
6. Sikhs as part of the Punjabis were specifically brought to East Africa Protectorate for military purposes F.O 2/117, F.O 2/143 and F.O 2/170.
7. Kala Singh was the pioneer Sikh to penetrate the Maasai reserve, see Narain Singh ed. 'The Sikh Union Nairobi. Silver Jubilee 1934-1959'. Souvenir Brochure; p31
8. Report on Mombasa-Victoria Lake Railway Survey(London, 1893), V.7025, pp, 7, 92-93, 105-107.
9. The Sikhs emerged as a military community following the animosity unleashed to them by the Muslims, since the murder of their fifth Guru, Guru Arjun.
10. J.S Grewal Professor of History Punjab University Chardigarh, Oral interview, April, 1997.
11. Narain Singh concurs that "Practically all of them(Sikhs) were illiterate" Narain Singh edited 'The Sikh Union Nairobi. Silver Jubilee 1934-1959'. Souvenir Brochure;p49
12. Final Report, Cd. 2164, P.13. Report on Uganda Railway confidential, March, 28, 1899, in F.O. 2/558.
13. Final Report, Cd.2164. p13
14. Molesworth Report on Uganda Railway confidential, March 28, 1899, in F.O. 2/558. Sir Guilford Molesworth, was consulting engineer to the government of India for state Railway, passed through Tsavo on inspection of the progress of the Railway on behalf of foreign office and expressed satisfaction. See Col. Patterson J.H The Man Eaters of The Tsavo and other East Africa Adventures, Macmillan Publishers London 1907, p97
15. Jogindar Singh, Harcharan Singh Sagoo, Jajwant Singh Jassi agree to this view Oral interview Oct. 1996
16. Not many of the recruited police officers had formal training. This is underlined in the view that many of the Sikhs imported to Kenya were illiterate. See how a colonial magistrate who had worked with them describes the then force, cited in Foran W.R; The Kenya Police, 1887-1963 First Published in Great Britain Carke Doble and Brendon Limited 1962. P7
17. Ainsworth to Cranford, June 6, 1899 Ukamba in 1894, KNA.
18. Kenya land commission, Evidence and Memoranda (3 vol. London, 1934) Colonial No. 91, 111, 3041-2.
19. Foran, W.R. The Kenya Police, 1887-1963 First Published in Great Britain Carke Doble and Brendon Limited 1962.p8
20. F.O 2/117, F.O 2/143 and F.O 2/170. F.O. 2/11, Employment of Indian troops in the Protectorate, 1889-1896 I.O To F.O. Jan, 24, 1890 and IBEA Co. to F.O. Feb. 10, 1890. Indian Archive Foreign Department October 1899, Pros 10-15.
21. F.O. 2/117, Employment of Indian troops in the Protectorate, 1889-1896 I.O To F.O. Jan, 24, 1890 and IBEA Co. to F.O. Feb. 10, 1890. Indian NationalArchive Foreign Department October 1899, Pros 10-15.

22. '.....The Indian community has played a useful and in fact an indispensable part in the development of these territories. Apart from the construction of Kenya Uganda railway, the services of the Indian artisan(many Sikhs were artisans) and mechanics have been widely utilised by the public at large on work for which European agency could have been costly.'
23. C.O. 533/63 Girouard to Crewe November, 13, 1909, Enclosed Interim Report on E.A. Protectorate and Uganda Protectorate.
24. Narain Singh edited 'The Sikh Union Nairobi. Silver Jubilee 1934-1959'.Souvenir Brochure;p 49
25. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History, Punjab University Chandigarh, India, Oral interview, April, 1997. Also see Hari Ram, see History of the Sikh Vol.1'The Sikh Gurus'. '1469 1708' op cit p. 422.
26. Chandra ,Ram; Exclusion of Hindus from America due to British influence. San Francisco Ghadar Press Pub 1916 p23
27. Lochin C.H 'The Sikhs in California' in Punjab Past and Present. Essays in honour of Ganda Singh ed. by prof. Harban Singh 1976 Panjabi University Patiala. 1976.pp 293-294.
28. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History, Punjab University Chandigarh, India, Oral interview, April, 1997. Also see Kusum Nair, Blossoms in the Dust: The Human Element in Indian Development. (Chicago University Press, Midway reprint,1979) pp102, 103.
29. Narain Singh edited 'The Sikh Union Nairobi. Silver Jubilee 1934-1959'. Souvenir Brochure;p 49
30. African production was largely for subsistence needs, for further information see Van Zwanenberg. Primitive Accumulation in economic History.P147. The author got the information from Oral source
31. Return of Military Operations in British East Africa Protectorate 1902 - 1906. Enclosed in 'Jackson to Elgin' April 17, 1907 in C.A. 534/5
32. Patterson J.H The Man Eaters Of The Tsavo And other East Africa Adventures Macmillan Pub. London 1907. p129.
33. Grogan Witness Report to the Committee on Emigration Part II Cd. 51 93, pp. 260, 263.
34. Ibid. p21.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid
37. Ibid. p67.
38. Grant, J.A: A Walk Across Africa or Domestic Scenes from my Nile Journey Edinburg Pub. 1922. P.xv.
39. Narain, Singh: edited. Souvernir Brochure: Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934-1959. p.49. Harcharan Singh Sagoo, Bhupan S. Nagi, JogIndar Singh Marjara.they all concurred to this view. Oral interview August, 1996.
40. Narain, Singh: edited. Souvernir Brochure: 'Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934-1959'. p.38
41. There had been high overseas investment by the British in East Africa Protectorate prior to World War I.This was particularly true starting 1905 and eight years later it had reached the peak.
42. By 1902 the Railway had recruited up to 5000 Indians whose composition included Sikhs as subordinate staff on the Railway. While others worked in the government. C.O 533/63 Gerouard to Crewe 13 No. 1909, enclosed interim Report on E.A. Protectorate and Uganda Protectorate.
43. Narain Singh Edited 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi (Kenya) November, 1, 1963 opening ceremony of new Sikh Gurudwara 494th anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak

Devji Maharaja' p67.

44. Improvement of transport eased accessibility and was associated with opening up of new avenues of business both from the interior to major cities including Mombasa .
45. Narain Singh ed. Souvenir Brochure, Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959 P.49
46. Through their intermediary role the Sikh in the process of transacting business with Africans brought on local and international market goods from both the Africans and outside world. As a result of competition on these markets, there resulted need for production of quality products.
47. Narain Singh Edited Souvenir Brochure, Sikh Union, Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934-1959. P.31.
48. Though A. Bharati in his book The Asians in East Africa. Jayhind and Uhuru P. 162, makes a supposition with regard Sikhs intermarrying with Masai women, research revealed that , the two groups intermarried. Jogindar Singh Marjara, oral interview. Octomber 1996.
49. Renoutta S. The chairman Sikh Spreme Council of Kenya. He was born in Kenya. oral interview July, 1997.
50. Narain Singh ed. 'Souvenir Brochure, Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959' P.25
51. Carey Jones N.S. Anatomy of Uhuru. An essay of Kenya's Independence University of Manchester 1966, P.95. Describes white highlands as land whose altitude is outside the definitions of White Highland. The settlement of Indians at lowland Kbos I.O Emmigration Feb. 1904, Pros. 11, File 19, pp97, 113 and F.O 2/569 Elliot, Landowne, Jan. '5, 1902.
52. Raghbir Singh , a professor History Guru Nanak Dev. University, Amritsar. Oral interview, April, 1997. See A. Kapur, Sikh Separatism, The Politics of Faith Vikas Pub. House, PVT LTD, New Delhi 1986. pxi
53. From the oral interviews it was revealed that pioneer Sikhs started carrying out agriculture at Kibos as early as 1905. Jogindar Singh Marjara, oral interview. October 1996. For further reading see, Settlement of The Indians at Kibos. I.O Emigration, Feb, 1904, pros. 11, file19, pp. 97, 113, F.O 2/569, Eliot to Landowne, 5, Jan. 1902.
54. Waller to acting Commissioner, February, 8, 1907. In the Report of Committee over enigration. Part Three. Cd. 5194. P.43.
55. Memorandum from Nyansa Indian Farmers Association, Kenya Land Commission Evidence and Memoranda, col. No. 111. 2174 - 5.
56. The Jat Sikhs associate land with prestige as a means of livelihood . Not many Jat Sikhs would take the art of Artisanry.
57. Renoutta.S Chairman Sikh Supreme Council. Eldoret oral interview August, 6, 1997.
58. Narain Singh ed. 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi (Kenya) November, 1, 1963 Openning ceremony of new Sikh Gurudwara 494th anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Devji Maharaja' p67.
59. ibid.p64.
60. Ibid
61. Liver Pool Post, 21, Sept. 1910.
62. Narain Singh Edited 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi (Kenya) November, 1, 1963 Openning ceremony of new Sikh Gurudwara 494th anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Devji Maharaja' p51.
63. up to date the Indian community as a whole look at this past with nastolgia and assert their right over Kenya because of their role. See 'Daily Nation Oct. 20, 1996.

P7.

64. The impact of world war I was experienced by the commercial and non business community in East Africa Protectorate. The Sikh commercial class was on the brink of collapse just like the colonial economy.
65. Narain Singh Edited 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi (Kenya) November, 1, 1963 Opening ceremony of new Sikh Gurudwara 494th anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Devji Maharaja' p64.
66. Ibid. p64.
67. Hill M. *Permanent Way: vol.1 Story of the Kenya and Uganda Railway Nairobi East Africa Railway and Harbour 1950*. Ch. Xiv.
68. The introduction and use of lorry transport and extension of the Railway to these centres boosted the colonial economy.
69. Extract from the occupations of the pioneer members of the Sikh Union. Narain Singh Edited 'Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934-1959' Souvenir Brochure, p25.
70. Report of the Economic Development Committee 1934 pp 124-131.
71. Confidential, letter signed by principal labour officer, V. M Fisher, to all provincial Commissioners and Municipal engineers and all labour officers, June, 25, 1930.
72. Report by K.P.S. Menon on 'Marketing legislation in Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya 1935'. C.O. Pamphlet No.274, folio P.10 942.
73. Ibid.
74. East African Indian National Congress Memo presented to Lord Moyne....."cmd. 1093(1932) PP 19-21, 28.
75. Narain Singh ed. 'Siri Guru Singh Sabha Nairobi (Kenya) November, 1, 1963 Opening ceremony of new Sikh Gurudwara 494th anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Devji Maharaja' p85.
76. Ibid. p140.
77. Unlike in Kenya, the results of world war II in Europe were appalling. Britain had to fight an economic war to revive the then dwindling pound against the dollar. In Kenya the business community benefitted from this economic struggle.
78. Harcheran Singh Sagoo, Bhupander Singh Nagi, Jaswant Singh Jassi and Jogindar Singh, Oral Interview August, 98.
79. As from the 1930's the Sikhs started to get into construction related industry. They were about 20%. See Narain Singh ed. 'Souvenir Brochure, Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959' p25.
80. The loyalists Sikhs showed interest of supporting the colonial government see Narain Singh ed. 'Souvenir Brochure, Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 - 1959' p51.
81. See Parminder K Bhachu in the book Twice Migrant, East Africa Sikh Settlers in Britain, London Taristock 1985 p 205. Bhachu carried out research in U.K.
82. There is a saying among the Sikhs that life is short lived but has to be lived with honour. Do Din Jeona parr Jeona ansiakhi De nau.
83. Raghbir Singh Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India Oral interview April 1997. concur with J.S Grewal Punjab University Chandigarh India, Oral Interview April, 1997, that this was enshrined amongst the Sikhs and more often influenced their working habits.
84. Balbindar Gill the only son of Indar Singh Gill, manages the timber business inherited from his father, Oral interview October 1996.
85. Ibid.
86. Unpublished. Bio-data of Indar Singh Gill.
87. Ombongi Kennedy, oral interview, November, 1996. He was a beneficiary of Gill's Education fund. Balbindar Gill sponsored his two year Mphil. Studies abroad(in

India).

88. Raghbir Singh, Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India, oral interview April 1997.
89. East Africa And Uganda Mail. See Editorial, Jan, 31, 1903.
90. East Africa and Uganda Mail. Editorial Feb. 17, 1903.
91. Report of the Economic Development Committee, 1934 p124-131.
92. Kenya Weekly News enclosed in secretary Nakuru, Indian Association To Secretary Indian elected Members Organisation (Iegco). August, 16, 1939, KNA M.C. EAINC Rec. Reel C.
93. Sunday Post (NRB) extract from Legislative Council. Debates April, 19, 1944 Vol.18. Part 2, col. 171.
94. Guru Nanak summarised Sikh tenets as "*Kirt Kara, Wand Chhako, Naam japo*". It means that 'thou shalt earn thy living by honest means, share the fruits of thy labour with thy fellow beings and thou shalt practice the Discipline of name 'nam'.
95. The colonial policies put the Sikhs and other Indians within common, residence and economic class, thus they interacted as equals. In the same circumstances Africans were kept in inferior positions in the government and in terms of residence and employment thus they were far removed from the Indian community. The relationships amongst Sikhs and Indians, and Africans reflected this background.
96. Thus it was the economic regulations which put the Sikhs in economic union with other Indians, and distanced them from the Africans.
97. This practice continued into Independent Kenya See The Kenya Times. August, 16, 1993. The president advised Asians " to go about their business with genuine interests—" Also see Daily Nation February, 23, 1982. p1
98. Since the Sikhs were well positioned in colonial economy they established economic enclaves than the Africans, they thus became major businessmen of almost all sectors of the economy interacting with other Indians than with Africans, particularly with regard to major business contracts.
99. Raghbir Singh Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India, concurs with Bakshish Singh Lecturer Punjabi University Patiala, India, that Sikhs in India were more free to interact with others. In Kenya Sikhs easily share pubs with Africans. Rattan Kaur Channa (Mrs) oral interview September, 1996. She was the chairperson Sikh Women Society. See Rama Kant, Agnihotri. in Crisis of Sikh Identity. The Sikhs in England. Bahri Publications, New Delhi 1987. pp13, 14.
100. Statistical Abstract of Punjab 1988. P107
101. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History, Punjab University Chandigarh, India, Oral interview, April, 1997.
102. Upindar J.K makes a comparative remark about the Sikhs with regard to their enterprising ability see Sikh Religion and Economic Development. National Book Organisation, 1970 Pub. New Delhi, 1990. pp38,39.
103. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History, Punjab University Chandigarh, India, Oral interview, April, 1997.
104. Bakshish Singh Lecturer Punjabi University Patiala, India, oral interview. April, 1997.
105. Raghbir Singh Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar India oral interview April, 1997.
106. Narain Singh ed. Souvenir Brochure, 'Sikh Union Nairobi Silver Jubilee 1934 – 1959' p25, see it in conjunction with, The graph by Majit Singh Unpublished Work , Seminar Paper 1983/84, Department of Geography, Ahmad Bello University. P.10.
107. Narain Singh, ed. 'Nanak Prakash' 1962 and that of 1969.

- 108 Punjab scholars doubted if there were a big number of Sikh returnees from Kenya. Rajbir Singh, Indu Bunga, J.S Grewal concurred to this view.
- 109 Laws of Kenya, Trade licensing Act 1950. P.5.
- 110 Kasum Nair, was a journalist, who travelled in India between 1958-1960 and made her conclusions, see Blossoms in the Dust: The Human Element in Indian Development (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, Midway, Reprint 1979) pp102-103. Randhawa M.S, Green Revolution A Case Study of Punjab (Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, PVT. LTD. 1974) p30.
- 111 Rama Kant Agnihotri. Crisis of Sikh Identity, Sikhs in England Bahri Pub. New Delhi 1987, p13.
112. Indarjit Singh, 'The Sikhs And Indian Economy' A seminar Paper' organised by Shatabdi committee. In Upindar J.K Sikh Religion And Economic Development, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 1990. P6.

CHAPTER THREE

4.0 SIKHS IMPACT ON KENYA'S TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

A CASE STUDY OF MAKHAN SINGH:

4.1 Overview of Kenya's Trade Union Movement and Makhan Singh's Early Life

Alongside Sikhs economic struggles was the emergence of workers organizations whose thesis was to fight for the workers well being. There emerged exclusively communal labour organization amongst the Sikhs, Whites and later Africans which pressed for workers communal interest. Though the labour struggles provided an avenue for Africans Sikhs union through Makhan Singh however, Makhan Singh's communal synthesis resulted to the Asians and Whites anti thesis to this unity. In this chapter Makhan Singh's role in Kenyan trade union movement is traced from his upbringing more specifically with the regard to social and political environment that surrounded his youth.

The trade union movement in Kenya under Makhan Singh came to involve not only the associations of the employed persons, but also nationalists and later excited the general public. The workers were drawn to perceive their working conditions from a critical point, as workers and not members of a certain race. This was with regard to provision of workers benefits like allowances, pay, including legal defense of their rights and compensation of accident victims at place of work. The workers under Makhan Singh put pressure on the employer and government through negotiations and strikes. The main driving force of trade union movement was enshrined in the collective bargaining. During his time, Makhan Singh made efforts towards uniting workers to a single voice and worked to increase their collective power. Prior to his advent into Kenya's trade union movement, workers' associations were racially and communally

oriented.¹

The factors which encouraged racial groupings within trade unions, and which Makhan Singh tried to fight against, included the racial allocation of jobs both in the civil and private sector, which were characterised by separate and racially determined scheme of service for each community. The colonial government applied the apartheid policy. There was racial allocation of housing, wages, medical services and labour laws among the Africans, Indians and whites. Africans in the service, were the lowly paid, Indians were better and the Europeans held all the top managerial posts. Makhan Singh according to racial arrangement belonged to the middle level class. The basic issue is to explain Makhan Singh's achievement in Kenya's trade union movement in the light of Sikhs' characteristics, more specifically, why he decided against the racial hierarchy which, favoured him, according to colonial racial arrangement, and suffer for the creation of a homogenous society.

During the colonial period Africans were subjected to racial labour laws which put them in an inferior position than the Indians and the white settler. These laws included vagrancy ordinance of 1896. African Pass Ordinance and Master's Servant Ordinance of 1900. Hut Tax Ordinance of 1902 and Labour Rule of 1907, that empowered the African chiefs to conscript African worker for the White Settlers. Registration of Domestic Servants Ordinance of 1910. And the *Kipande* system (that was) African Registration Ordinance of 1915. These factors contributed to the emergence of racially based political agitation in Kenya. The Africans, for example, formed regional political organizations to fight the racial laws. The Kikuyu Association was formed in 1919 and later, in 1921 changed its name to Kikuyu Central Association and eventually East African Association. The above political associations consisted of

Africans only. Much as there were Indians who sympathised with the African cause, they did not become members of the association.² These however, should not be misconstrued to mean that there were no common problems and efforts made to unite Africans and Indian workers prior to Makhan Singh. In March 1914, there were efforts by Indian Unionists to arouse workers' consciousness against low wages paid to the workers. Mehr Chand Puri and Tirath Ram were the leaders of the employees of Railway and Public Works Department. They advised the workers not to resume work until their demands were all met. The colonial government retaliated on the two leaders and deported them, on July 1914, thus bringing an early demise of the organisation.³

Poor housing, poor medical scheme and low wages caused the Indians' labour protests. Though the African workers faced the same problems to an equal degree, they had more serious and frequent labour laws, inferior medical scheme, housing and wage rates not experienced at the same magnitude either with Indians or European workers. In 1922, the Railway Artisan Union with Sikhs as officials was formed. It had Sudh Singh, (the father of Makhan Singh) as the Secretary, Sohan Singh, as President, Ujagar Singh Padianwala, as treasurer and Lal Singh, as member⁴. The unionists demanded withdrawal of labour retrenchment whose plans were underway and ten percent wage reductions⁵. The authorities punished the leaders of Railway Artisan Union. Sohan Singh's employment was terminated, Ujagar Singh's contract was not renewed, Sudh Singh was retired prematurely while Lal Singh was deported.⁶ Interestingly no African was involved, nor faced the wrath of colonial authority since none was a member much as the problems they detested was felt by the Africans even at higher magnitude. As we shall see, it was Makhan Singh in the 1930's who made this possible. Meanwhile, the railway Artisan Union prevented the colonial government from effecting wage

reductions and labour retrenchment. They succeeded in getting an additional of one annual free Railway pass.⁷

Sudh Singh, after he was sacked started a private printing press, at first called it 'Khalsa Press' and later changed name to Punjab Press. It was here, that Makhan Singh (Sudh Singh's son) gained the experience of workers' conditions after completing the London Matriculation examination.⁸

Eight years, after the demise of Railway Artisan Union, there were yet other efforts made by the Railway artisans, masons and carpenter to form a union. Their objectives included legislation for compensation of accident victims, standardization of working hour at eight per a day⁹, improvements of working conditions that had deteriorated due to the 1930 economic depressions. The wage rates had also gone down. Like other workers' organizations, which had preceded, it also remained racial in orientation. The Protective Society of Kenya, founded in early 1930's, was in theory open to all people regardless of race, religion or creed. However in operation and composition, it was solely an Indian organisation.¹⁰ The membership, reflected harmony of inter-Indian religio-communal differences (it involved Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims). It had the blessings of such Indian nationalists in Kenya as Isher, Dass, Shams-ud-Deen. Its officials were Purdhan Gujjar Singh, Secretary Bhagat Singh Viridi and Treasurer Isher Singh. Two years later, the Indian artisans formed the Indian Labour Society¹¹, it also remained an Indian body and its life span was also short lived. It came to an end within a year.¹²

Until mid 1930's, there were no tangible, consistent, anti-racial and selfless efforts made by either the Sikhs or Africans workers to bring about a unified multi-racial trade union. The initial Associations though called unions, they were not according to

the traditional meaning of what a union meant.¹³ They lacked collective activity nor were they formed by a combination of societies covering a number of trades. Prior to 1934, trade union movement in Kenya was used to mean any combination of workers for collective bargaining, whether it was communal (involving only Muslims or Sikhs). Meanwhile, the trade unionists activities prior to 1934 prepared the ground for more concerted trade union activities initiated and consolidated by Makhan Singh¹⁴

To analyse and understand Makhan Singh's role in Kenya's trade union movement, more specifically within the traditional setting of Sikhism we have to come to grips with his childhood. Makhan Singh was born in December 27, 1913 at a village in the then India, (Prior to the partition) called Gharjak of Gujran wala District (now in Pakistan). Makhan, spent his childhood in utter poverty.¹⁵ He migrated from India and arrived at Nairobi in April 1927. He followed his father who had come seven years earlier, to work on the railway as an artisan. Prior to his coming, Makhan Singh had lived with his mother in seclusion, because most of his relatives had perished in a plague of 1902.¹⁶ Makhan Singh's father Sudh Singh, before coming to East Africa Protectorate had similarly lived away from his family. He had partly worked with the British army in India during the First World War between 1916 and 1914¹⁷. Since he had no relatives Makhan Singh's acquaintances were neighbours. Having been born in a poor background, Makhan Singh came to understand poverty and people's suffering from the beginning, particularly with regard to discrimination based on race and caste. However as a young man Makhan Singh was brought up in a Sikh environment which emphasised equality of humanity, regardless of race, creed, religion or caste.¹⁸

After his arrival in Kenya, Makhan Singh was taken to the Government of India School (now Jamhuri Boys situated on Limuru Road Nairobi). While in school, Makhan

Singh did not only sit for London Matriculation examination at the age of 18 years, but also came in contact with communist literature, which made him detach from practicing Sikh faith however by retaining ideals which were concomitant to Sikhs. At the end of his studies in 1931, Makhan joined his father's (Sudh Singh's) printing press. Sudh Singh had been sacked from the Railway following his participation in Railway artisan protests of 1922. He had been the secretary of the Railway Artisan Union.¹⁹ While working at his father's printing press, Makhan Singh was exposed to the workers' problems, their living and working conditions, and their wage rates. He came to understand exploitative nature of employers. Though Makhan Singh wore a turban, kept long hair and beard, he never observed Sikh religious practices after 1931. Prior to his coming Makhan Singh, had been a follower of Sikhism. In India he had acquaintance with Sikh Scriptures ideals and history. The Julian Wala bagh shooting similarly influenced his future career.²⁰ During this occasion there was indiscriminate massacre of the Sikhs ordered by General Dyer in the Jullianwala Bagh at Amritsar on April 13th, 1919. This made the Sikhs mistrust the British Colonial Government and there was an open defiance of the British Law, particularly by the Sikhs.

4.2 Makhan Singh's Role In Kenyan Trade Unionism: 1935 - 1950

Makhan Singh's entry and role in Kenya's trade union movement was accompanied by the integration of humanistic principles into worker's organisation. He was a turning point from solely racial workers organisation to multi-racial workers union and independence struggles of Kenya. Makhan Singh reflecting Sikhs' ideal, which emphasised equality of humanity entered Workers liberation struggle by transforming a racially designed 'Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union to 'Labour Trade Union of Kenya.²¹

Kenya Indian Labour Trade union was racially an Indian and an artisan organisation. Makhan Singh was invited to join it to provide leadership. The Sikh Gurus provided leadership to the downtrodden Hindus of Punjab. Guru Nanak opposed oppression of the Hindus. Aware of Sikh's culture, which underlined human equality, Makhan Singh began to transform Kenya's trade union movement along the same line. The Sikh Gurus had taught human equality²². At the time of Guru Nanak, for example, there was hostility between Muslims and Hindus. Indian society was divided in rigid castes. It was wrong for a Shudra (the lowest rank before the outcaste according to the Hindu) to freely associate with other lower caste person. There were restrictions to inter-caste marriage, material progress had been impaired by caste rules, ability and skill had been relegated to birth rite. Castes made occupation hereditary. There was bigotry and superstition. Guru Nanak preached unity of man. He declared that there was no Hindu or Muslim and that all human beings were equal. Nanak propounded that there was only one God worshipped by all humanity, who were His children and disapproved caste by proclaiming that:

False is caste---, one Supreme Lord sustains all.²³
 Neither caste nor birth will be inquired-----
 As thou actest, so will be thy caste and thy status.²⁴
 Neither caste nor position will be recognised hereafter.
 They alone will be pronounced good whose merit is reckoned
 worth of honour.²⁵
 Know men by their worth. Do not ask their caste.
 There is no caste in the next world.²⁶

Guru Amar Das declared:

When you die, you do not carry your caste with.
 It is your deeds---²⁷

Guru Nanak thus imbibed into Sikhism fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humanity.

Guru Gobind Singh baptised five Sikhs from different castes with 'Amrit' and put them at par with each other and to him²⁸.

Makhan Singh on the other hand having been born by Sikh parents had his early life in religiously Sikh society, which reflected the above ideals. He came to live in a society where racism was institutionalised. Reflecting ideals of his upbringing and nationalistic attributes Makhan Singh, initiated drastic changes in trade union movement in Kenya. He influenced and brought about change of name of a racially titled 'Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union', to Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) on April 18, 1935. Thus, Makhan Singh's desire was for an intrinsically human non-racial trade union and a nationalised (Kenyanised) workers organisation, which obliterated racial distinctions. This was underlined in the clause that the new organisation adopted after he joined it. Membership of the organisation was made open to all regardless of race, creed, religion or caste.²⁹ Registration fee was made affordable, fixed at 50 cents at entry. The officials of LTUK, although did not reflect a racial mix however fostered intra-Indian union of the Sikhs and Indians. Makhan Singh was appointed Secretary General, and Gulam Mohammed President. The speeches released on the occasion of inauguration of the new union invited the Africans to join. The speakers in unison addressed the workers' conditions³⁰ as human beings and stressed the workers' power inherent in collective bargaining.³¹ In pursuance of extreme humanistic principles and working conjunction with other unionists, Makhan Singh, transformed the workers' local demands to those demands of workers in Great Britain. On that occasion, the transformation of trade union movement was emphasised in the resolution adopted that on the occasion of His Majesty's silver jubilee, all the workers are paid like those in Great Britain³². By emphasising equal status for workers in Kenya as was in Britain, the

unionists propounded not only equality of workers but equality of humanity in the world over as was emphasised in Sikhism. Makhan Singh's role in Kenya's trade union movement along this line was partially realised when eventually there was attachment of Kenya's trade union movement and the British Trade Union Congress³³.

Makhan Singh adopted and supported militant approach (elaborated later in the chapter) as was enshrined and instilled in Sikh culture. This characterised the trade union movement after 1935. Makhan Singh as Guru Gobind Singh had proclaimed, supported use of strikes if the workers' demands were not met. Guru Gobind Singh told the Sikhs that if all other means had failed it was possible to draw the sword. 'The Sikh Review' summarised Guru Gobind's teaching with regard to application of force as one who:

---infused a new spirit amongst his disciples to fight heroically against oppression, not with a view to inflict pain but for upholding just cause³⁴

Guru Nanak planted the seeds of revolution among the Sikhs. Sikhism was opposed to oppression and exploitation. It does not recognise the superiority of the high born persons or economically better placed to dominate others. To the Sikhs, wealth was not permanent³⁵.

A year after the formation of labour Trade Union of Kenya in 1935 and the appointment of Makhan Singh as Secretary General, it became more forceful. At the annual General Meeting, held on September 6, and 13, 1936 the Labour Trade union of Kenya put up demands together with threats of strike if their demands were not addressed. The demands of labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) on this occasion were not racial they included, need for standardization and application of eight working hours a day to all workers. Legislation's for compensating accident victims while on duty.

Amendment of the 1925 Shop Hours Ordinance, to protect shop assistants (whose inclusion were Africans) from working after the elapse of eight hours.³⁶ While at the meeting Makhan Singh in conjunction with other unionists underscored mass action if their demands were not addressed. Depiction of militancy was underlined, in their giving the employers a dateline, the period within which their demands were to be implemented. October 1, 1936 was declared the implementation date for the workers grievances. Equally important, in the enhancement of militancy was spelling of strategies for successful implementation of collective bargaining, appealing to workers consciousness, to perceive each others predicament as their own.

Like Guru Gobind Singh who established the Khalsa Panth by obliterating physical and religious barriers, Makhan Singh's effort to establish workers unity was above race, creed, religious affiliations or ethnicity³⁷. After Guru Gobind Singh had initiated the Khalsa Panth, he appealed to them to remain united in the brotherhood, seeing each others predicament as ones own,

I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, obliterating all difference of religion. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules laid down for them in the "*sastras*" abandon them altogether and, adopting the way of co-operation, mix freely with one another. Let none deem himself superior to another. Do not follow the old scripture. Let no one pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are considered holy in the Hindu religion or adore the Hindu deities, such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga, but all should believe in Guru Nanak and his successors. Let the men of the four castes receive baptism, eat out of the same vessel, and feel no disgust or contempt for one another.³⁸

Thus Makhan Singh's unwavering stand with other unionist was within the realm of Sikhism. The means and unity he sought to establish among workers was the same that the Sikh Gurus had engaged and institutionalised.

By May 1936 Makhan Singh had increasingly become a liberator and an enemy

of the British colonial government but had not attained racial unity. Meanwhile, the consciousness to workers about their rights had become a threat to the Europeans, who branded the integration of awareness to the workers indoctrination³⁹. The multiplicity of strikes in 1936 were revelations of Makhan Singh's daring leadership, alongside the impact of the sinking ideals of labour Trade Union of Kenya. Above all, it was a gauge for determining the level of consciousness that the unionists had imparted to the workers about their rights.⁴⁰ In that year there was workers' unrest expressed by strikes at Nairobi, involving building contractors, the Public Works Department, and the printing press.

Nevertheless, there still was, racial affiliations in trade unionism by 1936. On November, 1, 1936, when the Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK) started to publish a monthly paper 'Kenya Worker'⁴¹ later named *East Africa Kirt*, it was written in Hindi and Punjabi. Thus it was both racial and audience oriented. It excluded from its audience, not only the Africans but also other Indian communities that did not understand the two languages. Similarly amongst the Indians, we had communal labour organizations like the Cutchi, Gujerati Labour Welfare Association, the Muslim Labour Union and East Africa Ramgarhia Artisan Union. Thus, even with the LTUK, there still existed communal labour organisations.⁴²

Speeches notably from May 1, 1936 were made in more languages including English, Kiswahili and Hindustani by LTUK. About three years later, on July, 23, 1939 at a Labour Trade Union Conference, speeches were made in Kiswahili, English and Hindustani. The use of more than one language particularly Kiswahili endeared the workers union to the Africans. Fred Kubai admitted that the problem of poor communication had inhibited the progress of trade union movement.⁴³ The wider

audience that Makhan Singh and other unionists targeted aimed at fighting language barrier which, was yet another pillar of racism and disunity among workers and also among nationalists.

Though the regional umbrella union that Makhan Singh had always wished to form encompassing the East Africa region was achieved with the formation of Labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA) but had limited efficacy. It however showed that Makhan Singh's labour struggles went over borders and with it were Sikhs' anti-racist tendencies. Makhan's efforts aimed at awakening people in East Africa irrespective of consequences and race to get the government redress their problems. On March 6, 1937, under the inspiration of Makhan Singh, the labour Trade Union of Kenya was expanded to cover East Africa. This was partly to cater for the workers whose services covered East Africa, unite workers in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika and was also to fight racism then exhibited by the colonial laws. In Tanganyika, the registrar of Trade Unions granted the registration of labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA) in the first half of 1939⁴⁴. Makhan Singh's anti racist desire were expressed there. The unionists, driven by the desire of fighting racial bearing in movement, advised the trade unionists in Tanganyika more specifically, 'Asiatic Trade Union of Tanganyika to exclude, its racial connotation 'Asiatic' and affiliate itself to the labour Trade union of East Africa'⁴⁵. The other efforts to fight racism in regional workers' union movement were witnessed on May 15, 1938. At the conference held on that date a suggestion was floated demanding uniform labour laws in East Africa in all trades and industries, equal medical and hospital scheme⁴⁶. In 1939, Makhan Singh at that time, the Secretary of LTUEA, fostering regional workers representation in East Africa released a memorandum to the colonial government in Uganda criticising the report which had been released by the

Commission of Enquiry with regard to labour situation in Uganda Protectorate⁴⁷. Makhan's Committee pointed out the shortcomings of the Enquiry Committee, which had resolved in favour of making draft labour conventions but failed to recommend inclusion of the workers and their organisation.

Makhan Singh's role in Kenya as the Secretary of the Labour Trade Union of East Africa did not only take militant course but also indicated signs of flexing stand. On May 5, 1937, he released a statement in support of the workers' demand of 25% salary increment together with establishment of trade unions within legislative perimeters.⁴⁸ To the Sikhs, militancy was applied to correct evil. For example despite the many wars Guru Gobind Singh fought with Muslim leaders, including the loss of his four sons, he accepted the invitation of his arch enemy Aurangzeb, to discuss peace.⁴⁹

Makhan Singh's role in Kenya's trade union movement involved suffering for what he believed was a righteous cause. To a true Sikh human dignity was of paramount importance and a Sikh was to reach out to the needy and the helpless. Suffering for the oppressed was sanctified, Guru Gobind Singh inspired even the weakest to dare die for a righteous course.⁵⁰ In the years 1939 and 1947, Makhan Singh who had traveled abroad in December 1939 spent part of his time in internment for freedom of the oppressed. Imprisonment did not deter his efforts of seeking to liberate the workers. Makhan Singh remained in India until after India's independence and returned to Kenya in August 22, 1947.

What has to be emphasised from the start is that, Makhan Singh's role in the integration of strikes in Kenya's trade union movement was not a one mans' struggle. However his organisational skills is compared to the way militancy was inculcated into Sikhism. Guru Nanak justified revolutions. He did not see the difference between the

rulers and the ruled since they were all immortal.⁵¹

The Sikhs, much as they had emerged as a uniting community between Hindus and Islam, became militant as a result of animosity unleashed to them by Muslims. Resistance against injustice was made part of the Sikhs. Consequently Makhan Singh's militancy, was a reflection of his up-bringing. Guru Nanak took note of oppression and warned the leaders of his time against it.⁵²

Sikhs' sixth Guru was the pioneer in integrating war into Sikhism. He fought two wars in 1698. At the time of his enthronement was girded with two swords one for Sikhs survival on earth and the other for heavenly war. The tenth Guru fought wars and lost four sons and their grand mother. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh sanctified militancy in Sikhism when he created the Khalsa Panth, the unpaid generals. In subsequent years Sikhs militancy was perfected on. Personal sacrifice for a righteous cause was made part of Sikhism.

Makhan Singh supported strikes, for correcting evil. In his submission before the commission of inquiry appointed to look into the circumstances which had brought about Mombasa strike in 1939, reflected his humanistic and nationalistic background⁵³. He justified the strike when he submitted that the workers' problems were not unique to Mombasa but were experienced all over Kenya⁵⁴. Depicting courage Makhan Singh, supported the strike because of low wages, long hours of work, that exceeded official time of eight hours. Poor housing, but higher rents and small house allowance. Insufficient food, poor sanitation and lack of medical scheme. Animosity to the strikers. Lack of legislation with regard to workers' compensation after accidents and lack of standardised wages including unemployment.

As from April 1935, after Makhan Singh had joined the LTUK it became

instrumental in organising the workers not only as a united single voice pin pointing at various problems which affected them, but also a united volatile force. In that year militancy was enshrined in the workers' threat to strike if their demands were not met. The unionists made adverse demands, for example, full payment for workers in Kenya like in Britain, apart from equating a Kenyan worker and that in Britain on the occasion of his Majesty's Silver Jubilee where they wanted a Kenyan worker paid like one in Britain, it carried with it a strong anti-racist sentiments attainable only by strike. Still in pursuance of their goals by militant means at the meeting of the Labour Trade Union of Kenya held on September 6 and 13, 1936, the unionists under the secretariat of Makhan Singh resolved and adopted the application of boycotts and strikes in their search for liberty⁵⁵. A year after the appointment of Makhan Singh, the unionists set conditions which, did not only apply to Indians but to all workers. These prerequisites became transcendental in causing many strikes in subsequent years after 1936. More specifically were the demands for legislation against accidents, betterment of working conditions with regard to length of working hours, wages and leave. The efficacy of Makhan's integration of militancy in trade unionism at Nairobi was realised on October 1, 1936, when nearly all the employers except one⁵⁶, succumbed to the strikers' dateline that the workers had given as marking the end of attaining their demands. The failure of the Indian and European contractor's firms to implement the workers' demand of 25% salary increment in December, 1936, before April, 1937, (the dateline the unionists set for the implementation of their grievances) led to the strike. Together with strikes was the emergence of mass procession.

The workers carried placards bearing their demands.⁵⁷ The colonial government retaliation on the striking workers reflected both the dangerous turn that the unionists

had adopted and the far reaching impact it projected. The President of labour Trade union of East Africa, Mota Singh was arrested. Makhan Singh depicting support for the strike and solidarity with the strikers led a delegation in conjunction with Taj Din, Mohinder Singh Rohal, Ragi Balwant Singh, Captain Mongal Singh, Gulam Mohammed, Govind Oketa and Karta Singh, to the central government. They protested the arrests.

Two years, after, 1937, there was another mass protest against the white highland order in council,⁵⁸ also supported by LTUEA. The Order in Council led to legalisation and demarcation of white highland for the white. At the open session of Labour Trade Union of East Africa, July, 23, 1939 they protested the implementation of the White Highland Order in Council. The unionists demanded for its repeal because of its racial implications.

The Labour Trade Union of East Africa still under the leadership of Makhan Singh, supported the strike of African railway apprentices at Nairobi in 1939. The strike influenced African workers at Mombasa to go on strike from June 17 and 27, 1939⁵⁹. The demands of the workers included, increase in wages, reinstatement of sacked apprentice workers at Nairobi and reinstatement of their salaries and better housing⁶⁰

The other conspicuous trait of the Sikhs also akin in Makhan Singh was the true blood of loyalty and devotion to the Path of struggle. The Sikhs were trained not to allow private feelings, desires, love or sorrows to come between them and the good of their *Panth*. A true Sikh fought life and death for his faith. Consequently, it was as a result of Makhan Singh's unswerving leadership that trade unionism in Kenya rose above unprecedented levels. Fred Kubai who became a long time companion of Makhan Singh in Kenya's trade union admitted that, one of the problems that labour Trade union,

of East Africa faced was lack of interest among Africans who did not see the relevance of such a union. They thought that being a trade union, only concerned businessmen⁶¹. Africans joined Makhan Singh because he was on their side. Having been brought up in Sikh environment Makhan Singh had internalised the teachings of human equality and repudiation of oppression, caste and appraisal of charity which for him was expressed in selfless sacrifice for the liberation of the oppressed. Guru Nanak had emphasised brotherhood, humanity and unity of man. The Sikhs' fifth Guru instructed the Sikhs to help others with money and material. He asked them to serve travelers with drink and food⁶². He further instructed them to contribute one tenth of their earning to others. These virtues were part of the Sikh practice and History which Makhan Singh was aware of and had partly grown up in the same.

Makhan Singh's role in Kenya's trade union movement was geared towards the attainment of a common discussion with Africans as equals. This was explicit after the third conference of the Labour Trade Union of East Africa. Makhan Singh appraised the resolution because they had been arrived at by joint deliberations of African and Asian workers.⁶³

In February, 12, 1949 Makhan Singh, despite threats of deportation became instrumental in the formation of an epitome of the central workers union in Kenya where Indians and Africans were put on the executive. He planned a meeting that proceeded to form the apex of central workers' union and circulated letters to that effect in March 1949. On May 1, 1949, the East Africa Trade Union Congress was formed.⁶⁴ Its formation was accompanied by integration of Africans into the Central Workers Organisation of Kenya. The Central Council Bureau of EATUC was headed by Fred Kubai as the President, Nelson Kagao and B.J. Bhamcha, Vice Presidents, Makhan

Singh was General Secretary, H.M. Stanley and Pranlal Chwaganlal were Assistant Secretary, Richard K. Munyatta, Assistant Treasurer. At the inauguration of EATUC, KAU's president who later became Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta attended and addressed the gathering. Other African dignitaries who attended the inauguration were Eliud Mathu, Mbiyu Koinange and Jesse Kariuki. In his speech, Jomo Kenyatta, like Makhan Singh, underlined the need for a united force of unionists and nationalist in their struggle for freedom.

By January 14, 1950, the unity of Indian workers and or African nationalists had become manifest. At a mass meeting, held at Desai Memorial Hall on the fore mentioned date, there were speeches from both Asians and Africans. Most of the members were Africans. Besides Makhan Singh and Ujagar Singh, there was Fred Kubai, John Mungai, Kigume Moses, Tom Mbotela and James Beutah. The unionists without regard to race, demanded eight hours as days' work. Provision of leave to all workers, paid gazetted holiday, equal pay for equal work for all workers, a month notice for termination of employee and paid sick leave. Thus, by 1950, the trade union activities were not only transferred to the Africans but also integrated with Kenya's nationalistic struggle.⁶⁵

The activities of Makhan Singh were akin to Sikhism. Sikhs in India were the military wing of the Hindus. Guru Arjun died a martyr for his righteous course of spreading Sikh faith. The Muslim rulers killed Guru Tegh Behadur as he protected the Hindu sacred symbol *tilak* and *janeau*. Prior to his death, Guru Tegh Behadur had made tours in Eastern Punjab to strengthen the Hindus against Aurangzeb's declaration.⁶⁶ Makhan Singh like the Khalsa panth was unpaid national soldier for the services he offered. Like Guru Tegh Behadur Makhan Singh's struggles aimed at attaining freedom

for others. Guru Gobind Singh believed that 'Freedom finds its fulfillment in the service for others'⁶⁷ Makhan Singh raised the workers and turned them into variant warriors who dared danger.

Makhan Singh reflecting the Sikhs' background he remained a fighter up to the end. Qazi Nur Mohammed, who had fought the Sikhs in train of Ahmad Shah in 1764, described the Sikhs' character though with offensive language as;

Do not call the Sikhs 'dogs' because they are lions and they are brave like lions in a battlefield. How can a hero of the battle who fights like a lion be a dog? If you cherish a desire of learning the art of war, come before them in the field. They will show you such wonderful feasts of war. O! Swordsman! If you want to learn the modes of fighting, learn from them how to face the foe like a hero and how to come out unscathed from the battle. You may know that their title is Singh (Lion) and it is njustice to call them dogs.----. Besides their fighting, listen to one thing more to which they excel all other woriors. They never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a Queen or a slave girl. Adultery also does not exist among the dogs. None of them is a thief---⁶⁸.

It was within the same realm of militant and humanistic principle, as was enshrined in Sikhism that in 1950, Makhan Singh spearheaded the boycott of the inaugural ceremony of converting Nairobi Municipality to a city⁶⁹. Makhan Singh as Secretary General of EATUC and Fred Kubai President devised strategies for the boycott on February, 19, 1950, at a meeting held at Kaloleni Hall Nairobi. Makhan Singh in discard of racial and political privilege they were entitled to as a second in colonial society supported the boycott because of racial treatment of workers. He did not see the logic of the society racially demarcated in hierarchical manner with different privileges at each level could participate in the celebrations as equals. Sikhism repudiates caste and sees man as God's manifestation. During the colonial period the

whites dominated the Nairobi Municipal Council. Makhan Singh was opposed to the electoral process, which favoured him because of his race and demanded for the liberation of the workers. Many of the African workers in the municipality of Nairobi lived in dirty and unhealthy slums of Pumwani and Shauri Moyo. The boycott was to exert pressure to the colonial government to review the anti-trade union policies, which had led to de-registration of EATUC 1948. Makhan Singh demanded for the release of trade union activists and withdrawal of kipande (African registration) system. Makhan Singh did not see the benefit of elevating the status of Nairobi Municipality to a city where as there was racism exhibited by imbalance in the development of Nairobi, what he called two Nairobi's, for the rich and the poor. The latter was largely inhabited by Africans.⁷⁰ Makhan Singh emphasising nationalism observed that,

Celebrations, will be justified when this country's governance became truly democratic with the workers fully sharing in the tasks of government.⁷¹

Guru Nanak during his time was against cruel rulers and thus institutionalised the Sikhs attitude to ill instituted government.⁷² To the Sikhs social institution and association were intended to assist the individual attain the object of life, thus developing the individual to come to the realisation of the best in him. This was only attainable in a just fellow feeling environment where liberty and sense of responsibility prevailed on the part of the state.⁷³

The boycott of the celebration was timely. It did not only draw international attention to the plight of workers in Kenya, because the Duke of Gloucester was the one to present the charter, conferring city status to Nairobi Municipality on behalf of King George V, but was to show that humanity was supposed to be given equal treatment everywhere.

The colonial government released statements to down play the success of the boycott however the unity of workers and nationalists was evident. African political leaders led by Jomo Kenyatta and chief Koinange heeded the call of the unionist and did not attend inaugural ceremonies. In retaliation Makhan Singh was made part of the African-Colonial government's question when he was arrested with Fred Kubai on May, 15, 1950. The government's reaction was however, camouflaged under the pretext that Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai were leaders of unregistered EATUC, and that they had not dissolved the congress within three months as was required by law. Makhan Singh was thus charged of heading an illegal organisation. In addition he faced the charge of being in Kenya illegally.⁷⁴

As a Sikh, Makhan's transformation of trade unionism was achieved at the expense of his personal gain⁷⁵ for the sake of liberty of the oppressed. To the Sikhs, liberty was attained when a man was freed from the bondage of superstition and oppressive social practices and beliefs⁷⁶, where economic relations were not exploitative and where rulers were just and responsible.⁷⁷

The strike which emanated from the arrests of Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai were manifestations of the consciousness of the workers and nationalists to their rights. The strikes, which followed the arrest of the two (Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai), were organised by the Central Bureau of E.A.T.U.C, whose organisers were dominantly Africans. They included John Mungai, Chege Kabini, Mwangi Macharia, J.J. Simon, Mshengi Karanja, Gichure Gatama, S. Osore, Dishon Kihialo, Aggrey Minya, Metki Sadek, Anyanje, Willie George, William Kamau, Gachagi Gakau and Gerald J. Olola.⁷⁸ The fact that nearly all the strikers after Makhan Singh's arrest were Africans of different ethnic communities, reflected the impact of trade unionism to the tribal

boundaries that the colonial government had encouraged and institutionalised among different communities. Makhan Singh's role in Kenya's trade union movement thus involved africanisation of the movement, as a result not many Indians supported his ideals.⁷⁹

The arrest of Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai marked the complete transfer of trade union activities to the Africans. Mwangi Macharia and Chege Kabiru were appointed acting President and General Secretary of East Africa Trade Union congress. A secret strike committee consisting of only Africans was formed. It was led by John Mungai, J.J. Simon as Secretary, Mshengi Karanja, Rahab Njeri Munyinyi, Tumbo Kamau, Isaac Macharia and Nathaniel. The African unionists Mwangi Macharia, the acting President of EATUC who spearheaded the demand for the release of Makhan Singh, Fred Kubai and Chege Kibachie, were arrested, while warrant of arrest for the acting Secretary was issued.

Makhan Singh's integration into the larger Kenyan society was manifested when the colonialists fearing demonstrations at Nairobi transferred his case to Nyeri. Makhan Singh without fear of consequences admitted during trials that he had proposed a resolution demanding complete independence and sovereignty of the East Africa. On April 21, 1950, Makhan Singh while at a meeting attended by large number of Africans and Indians had demanded for a resolution declaring complete independence and sovereignty of the East Africa territories⁸⁰. Makhan displayed both multi-nationalism and universal liberty for the oppressed as is underlined in Sikhism when he opposed the Kenyan European settlers' effort to thwart the then proposed constitutional review in Tanganyika. The proposal had provided for majority African representation.⁸¹ Makhan Singh reflecting his inherent ant-racist stand had demanded that the Tanganyika reform

proposal was to be supported by all humanity regardless of race. Makhan for example, emphasized equality of humanity, when he wondered why the British had declared independence of India, Burma and Ceylon and not the East African countries.⁸² The revolutionary statements of Makhan Singh attracted bitter responses from both Indians and surprisingly from an African representative to the then Legislative Council Eluid Mathu. He asked Makhan Singh to withdraw his assertion.⁸³ A.B Patel repudiated Makhan Singh's stand claiming he was out of context of the agenda of the meeting.⁸⁴ An Indian lawyer branded Makhan Singh's speech communist, aimed at bringing the government down.⁸⁵ However, Jomo Kenyatta supported Makhan Singh.⁸⁶

Makhan Singh's courage was thus akin to the Sikhs. Banda Singh, for example, appointed by the tenth Guru to revenge on the Muslim leaders that had killed his four sons displayed ultimate courage, faith and sacrifice for Sikhism. This was recognised and integrated in Sikh theology. He turned down the pardon accorded to him and his son Ajit Singh, by the Muslims who had captured him, on condition that he denounces Sikhism. Banda Singh preferred martyrdom, by accepting his son and himself to die and not to denounce his faith. Guru Gobind Singh created the turbaned Sikhs, the Khalsa Panth from those who were ready to sacrifice their life for Sikh faith. Meanwhile Banda Singh's son, Ajit Singh was hacked to death in the face of his father.⁸⁷ Banda Singh's courage shocked the Muslim leaders who however ridiculed him.⁸⁸ Banda Singh's response was both poetic and philosophical, with a far-reaching impact to the Sikhs of that time and today.

I will tell you, whenever men become so corrupt and wicked as to relinquish the path of equity and abandoned themselves to all kinds of excesses, the providence never fails to raise up a scourge like me to chastise a race so deprived, but when a measure of punishment is full then he raises up men like you to

bring him to punishment.⁸⁹

Banda Singh was killed through stages of torture.

The suffering of Makhan Singh through arrests can be assessed within Sikhism. His war was for the rights of the unprivileged working class. In the event Makhan spearheaded the freedom struggle for free Kenya. On May 27, 1950, Makhan Singh was found guilty and, restricted at Lokitang in the North Frontier District where he was restricted for three years. He was transferred to Maralal where he stayed for seven years and later to Dol Dol where he stayed for a year, in all eleven years. After his release in 1961, the Africanised Makhan Singh was welcomed home by, among others Tom Mboya and Ronald Ngala.⁹⁰ While in internment, his (Makhan's) children were looked after by their grand father Sudh Singh and relatives.⁹¹

Makhan Singh's arrest in 1950 had been followed by raid on his father's printing press and ransacking of his house. Makhan's family missed their father's company and monetary aid but never became destitute⁹². After his release, Makhan Singh led a rather detached life from politics. Despite the fact that Makhan Singh's character as was explicit in his activities can be seen within his upbringing, however as a communist, he never attended Gurudwara except for social functions⁹³. His commitment and service to the oppressed, was opposed to ownership of property as was enshrined in communism. He refused to take over his father's printing press, arguing that he would work for less payments per month but not own the press.⁹⁴

At the time of his death, May, 18, 1973, Makhan Singh owned almost nothing his bank balance was Ksh.350.⁹⁵ Guru Gobind Singh aroused the minds of his followers to a feeling that they were to guard themselves against the snares of lust and wealth. And instead hanker after wealth of goodness, which should prevail everywhere and

tyranny be uprooted from the land⁹⁶. Makhan left behind his children and wife. To Makhan Singh, the workers right superseded that of his family⁹⁷. After Guru Gobind Singh lost his four sons he told his wife that the Sikhs and the Khalsa Panth were his family in spirit and that their departed four sons were meant for their services.⁹⁸ Thus Makhan Singh's selfless struggle had origins in his childhood, his role in Kenya's trade union movement was not for riches, rank or renown, but he sustained scars for others.⁹⁹

Makhan Singh's elder son Hindpal Jabbal's sheds light to their extent of events during their father's sacrifice for Kenya's nationalism. Hindpal Jabbal was born in 1937 at Nairobi. He had his early education 1941 and 1949 in India. While there he lived with his maternal parents. After coming back in 1948, Jabbal joined his fathers' old school, the Government of India High School, now Jamhuri High School. He finished his 'A' levels in 1954, however his father who was in internment, had no money to send him to Europe for further studies. This had been jabbal's wish. Luckily Jabbal got an Indian Cultural Scholarship and subsequently proceeded to India. He studied Bachelor of Science engineering between 1955 and 1958 at Roorkee University India. In 1959 he undertook formal postgraduate training at Ahmedabad Electricity Board for a year. After he returned to Kenya, like his father, he worked at his grandfather's printing press until he secured employment on January 1, 1961 with the East African Power and Lighting as an Engineer Assistant. In 1964, with ambition of studying further, he approached the Kenya Government for a scholarship. In reply he was told

Sorry you are not a black Kenyan. We are not going to sponsor you.¹⁰⁰

Luckily, Jabbal secured a Commonwealth scholarship in 1965 and proceeded to Britain for his Master of Science degree 'Power Systems' at the University of Manchester, Institute of Technology between 1965 and 1966. After he returned to Kenya, worked in

various positions in the Power and Lighting Company. He started as an Engineering Assistant in 1961 and moved up in ranks to the level of Protection Engineer 1968 and 1972, a year later moved to become an Assistant Chief Engineer. In November, 1973, and July 1979, he became Chief Planning Engineer. He was appointed Corporate Engineer in 1979 up to 1985, and retired when he was Chief Service Manager, the position he held from 1985 to 1987¹⁰¹. Jabbal took an early retirement from Kenya Power and Lighting (KPL). Almost immediately he was offered four-year appointment in Dominica West Indies. He came back in 1991, and later recalled back for a contract of one year between 1994 and 1995.¹⁰² Jabbal now owns an electrical consultancy firm. A shop steward in Dominica summarised jabbal's contribution as:

Mr. Jabbal is systematic and decisive. He is to the point. No beating around the bush, no child's play, no scheming. He is never too busy to see anyone, and he listens to every story. The man would even apologise when management or the company faults. He is straightforward in resolving personnel matters and always focuses on the human welfare aspect.--¹⁰³

The other surviving members of Makhan Singh's family include his wife Satwant Kaur. She was born in India in 1917, and she has been in Kenya since 1936. Makhan Singh's youngest son is a mechanic, owns workshop at Nairobi while, Makhan's daughter, lives in UK at Nottingham, she is married and holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry. She works with a research firm.

After independence Makhan Singh led a quiet life. He became the secretary of Historical Association of Kenya and later wrote two volumes on the trade union movement in Kenya the 'History of Kenya Trade Union Movement To 1952' and "Crucial Years of Kenya's Trade Union 1952-1956". Makhan Singh, least benefited from his role of independence struggle. The only honour he got was a road named after

him "Makhan Singh Road", in Nairobi.¹⁰⁴ By all means, this did not match the 11½ years Makhan Singh spent behind bars for the sake of Kenya's liberation. Thus, the history of Kenya's freedom struggle was not the preserve of Africans, and will remain with lacunae if there was no mention of Makhan Singh.¹⁰⁵

The Sikh Gurus had no political ambition other than fight against evil. Guru Gobind Singh, for example, did not make an attempt of seeking political glory, which he could have attempted by capitalising on the infighting between Aurangzeb's sons. Instead, he sought to reconcile the warring sons of Aurangzeb's, by assisting the rightful heir to the throne, Behadur Shah against the usurper Kam Baksh.¹⁰⁶ Following the arrest of Makhan Singh, the leadership of EATUC was jeopardised, until the emergence of Tom Mboya. He took over the unions' leadership, at that time, the union's name had been changed to 'Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions'. During his time Makhan Singh made trade unionism become training ground for nationalists. He created consciousness among the workers and made personal sacrifice.

---- for the basic rights of the unprivileged working class
(largely Africans) and spear-headed the cause for total
freedom.¹⁰⁷

Makhan Singh's roles in Kenya's trade union movement and its impact in Kenya's nationalistic struggle was carried out within Sikhs ideals, under the umbrella of communism. As self proclaimed communist, Makhan Singh repudiated religion. Karl Marx the proponent of communism had called religion the opium of the mind. However as a Sikh, Makhan Singh kept three of the four principles of individual progress as was enshrined in Sikhism. He kept his body free of smoking, drinking, burnished selfish thoughts of self-centredness, jealousy and vindictiveness, he struggled with hope confidence in service for others. Outwardly Makhan Singh remained a Sikh, he did not

denounce his name 'Singh'. He attended the Gurudwara for social functions. The pursuance of his goal, the repudiation of caste or communal identity and freedom for the oppressed were ideals enshrined in Sikhism. His withdrawal from practical life after independence, much as it was not a communist state was, a pointer that he had attained his ultimate, freedom for the oppressed.

END NOTES

1. The European workers' strike in British East Africa Protectorate in 1900 was against the withdrawal of their communal privileges, considered as part of their terms of service as a community and not as it affected either an Indian nor the Africans. In December 1902 the Africans police strike was entirely among the Africans and not general police protest. The same was of African strike near Mazras in 1908, the railway Indian workers strike at Kilindini harbour, and the Indian Rikshaw pullers strike at Nairobi.
Makhan, Singh History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. E.A. Publishing House 1969, Nairobi. P6.
2. Harry Thuku was assisted by the Indians. However they did not become members of either Kikuyu Association or East Africa Association. EAST AFRICA STANDARD, Nov. 15 1920, also see EAST AFRICA STANDARD July 5, 1921.
3. Mehr Chand Puri was the leader of Railway and Public works Department. This strike brought operations to a stand still on July 14, 1914.
4. Hindpal Singh Jabbal and Satwant Kaur concur. Oral interview July 3, 1997.
5. Makhan Singh. History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952 East Africa Publishing House Nairobi, 1969. P.41.
6. Ibid. pp.40, 41
7. Ibid. p. 41.
8. Hindpal Singh Jabbal Oral Interview July, 3, 1997
9. THE FAIR PLAY February, 14 1931
10. Makhan Singh; History of Kenya Trade Union Movement To 1952 East Africa Publishing House 1969. pp. 42 - 43.
11. Ibid. 45.
12. Ibid.
13. Ogot B A edited, 1952-1956 Crucial Years of Kenya's Trade Union Movement. Pub. Uzima Press Ltd, 1980. See Enyclopaedia Britannica vol.13 P554.
14. Pavan Sharma (Founder Kenya Hindu Mission): "The Hindu Bulletin" No. 42, 1996 P.1
15. Hind Pal Jabbal Oral Interview July, 3, 1997.

16. Hindpal Jabbal and Satwant Kaur Oral interview. July, 3, 1997
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid
20. Satwant Kaur oral interview July 3, 1997. During the Jullianwala Bagh shooting on April 13, 1919 at Amritsar, Punjabis were killed indiscriminately. This incident hardened the Sikhs who started to openly defy the law. Rajbir Singh oral interview Professor of History Guru Nanak Dev University.
21. Makhan Singh, History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952 East Africa Pub. Nairobi 1969. P.49.
22. Grewal J.S and Rajbir Singh concur over this view. While Guru Nanak taught unity between Muslims and Hindus he obliterated animosity and declared that; there was no Hindu nor Musalman.
23. Adi Grandhi, P83.
24. Ibid. P1330.
25. Ibid. P469.
26. Ibid. P349.
27. Ibid. P1363
28. 'THE SIKH REVIEW' P31.
29. Makhan Singh, History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969. P. 49.
30. Colonial Times. April, 24, 1935.
31. Ibid.
32. Makhan Singh, History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969 P. 49
33. Ibid. P69.
34. Guru Gobind Singh condemned evil and recommended punishment to transgressors. He made the day after Holi, Holi Mohalla a day for mock battle. 'THE SIKH REVIEW' P32.
35. Adi Grandhi P936
36. Makhan Singh: History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969 PP.54, 55. The unionists declared that with effect from October, 1, 1936, no worker was to work for more than eight hours and

there was to be no reduction in salary..

37. Makhan Singh: History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. Bombay 1950. P56.
38. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh; A Short History of The Sikhs p68 Macauliffe; The Sikh Religion Oxford 1909.PP 93-94.
39. East Africa Standard, May, 21, 1936, see editorial.
'The great danger, as we said ten days ago, is that the untutored mind of the African may be given an impression which would be dangerous to himself and unfortunate for the colony. In that danger lies the main reason why it is essential that the state, the ultimate concern of the people should intervene at the early stage to offer guidance --'
40. Native Affairs Department, Annual Report 1936 PP. 187, 188. Makhan Singh: History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969. P. 56.
41. Makhan Singh: History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969. P. 56.
42. Ibid. P62
43. Trade unionism, Executive; May 1987 P.20.
44. Makhan Singh: History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969. P. 7 The section of the report stipulated that the registrar could refuse to register a trade union.
45. Ibid.P69
46. Ibid. Also see East Africa Standard March, 15, 1948.
47. Ibid. full critique to Uganda's colonial government inquiry report PP 70 - 74.
48. East Africa Standard, May, 11, 1937.
'----- all those who are responsible for the welfare of the community ---- should make it part of their business to see that their functions and responsibilities are properly developed within the frame-work of a structure to which the whole country has agreed ----. What's important is that before the movement spreads its future progress should be visualised and regulated giving full opportunity to bodies legitimately formed to look after legitimate industry and social interest----
49. J.S Grewal Oral interview. April 1997. Retired professor of Punjab History Punjab university Chardigarh..
50. 'THE SIKH REVIEW' vol.xxii January, 1974. No.242- THE SIKH REVIEW113/A Chitta Ranjani, Calcutta,12.

51. Sri Guru Grandhi Saheb, PP 145, 360. Also see Khushwant Singh: A History of the Sikh (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1963) Vol.1 P29.
52. Adi Grandhi, P936.
53. Makhan Singh History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969. PP 88-94
54. Ibid. 88.
55. Ibid. P55.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid PP 58,59.
58. Ibid. 81. African nationalists also objected to the order in council
59. Ibid. PP63-64.
60. Ibid. P84.
61. Trade Unionism. EXECUTIVE, May 1987. ,P.20.
62. Makhan Singh, History of Kenya Trade Union Movement to 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969 P.
63. Ibid. P82
64. Makhan Singh. History of Kenya Trade Union Movement To 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969 P198.
65. 'The Kenya Weekly News' February, 24, 1950. editorial.
66. Raghbir Singh Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev university, Amritsar India Oral interview April 1997.
67. 'THE SIKH REVIEW' P32.
68. DR. Ganda Singh, (edited) Character of the Sikh as seen by Qazi Nur Mohammed in Punjab Past and Present Vol. 15 No.29-30 1981. Dept. of Historical Studies, Punjabi University Patiala.
69. Ibid. See Daily Chronicle March, 7, 1950.
70. Daily Chronicle March, 7, 1950. Sri Guru Grandhi Saheb, P1191.
71. Ibid.
72. Sri Guru Grandhi Sahib P1191.
73. Ibid. P1390.
74. Satwant Kaur and Hindpal Jabbal Singh Oral interview July 1997.
75. Hindpal Jabbal Singh and Kaur Oral Interview, op cit. July 1997.
76. Sri Guru Grandhi Sahib. P634

77. Jaran Bhai Gurdas P9
78. Makhan Singh. History of Kenya Trade Union Movement To 1952. East Africa Pub. House Nairobi, 1969 P 270.
79. Hindpal Singh Jabbal Oral Interview, July 3, 1997. Concurred with Satwant Kaur Oral Interview July, 3, 1997.
80. East Africa Standard, May 25, 1950, P5
81. East Africa Standard, April 24, 1950, P3.
82. East Africa Standard, April 25, 1950 P5.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. See the translation by Khushwant Singh in A History of the Sikhs (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1963) Vol.1 p.117
88. Ibid.
89. See the translation of *Siyar-Mutakherin*, pp79-80 by Khushwant Singh A History of the Sikhs, P.117
90. Colonial Times, October, 26, 1961. Later Makhan Singh was visited by Jomo Kenyatta at his home Park Road Nairobi, an identity of solidarity between nationalists and Trade unionists.
91. Hindpal Jabbal and Satwant Kaur Oral interview July, 3, 1997. Nairobi..
92. Ibid
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Hindpal Singh Jabbal. Oral interview July, 2, 1997.
96. 'The Sikh Review', P31.
97. Hindpal Singh Jabbal. Oral interview July, 2, 1997.
98. After Guru Gobind Singh baptised the five Sikhs he accepted merging into their new fraternity. 'The Sikh Review'P33.
99. Compare the same information with the role of the Sikh Gurus in Gupta Hari Ram History of The Sikhs: The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708 Munishram Manoharlal Pvt ltd New Delhi. P 431.
100. Hindpal Singh Jabbal. Oral interview July, 2, 1997.

101. Stima 1st Quarter P.P. 26, 27.
102. Mervin Williams. The General Manager unpublished work. P.6.
103. Ibid
104. Hind Pal Singh Jabbal Oral interview, 3, 1997.
105. Summary of Makhan Singh's Trade union activities. 'Late Makhan Singh, A Trade Unionist and Great Freedom Fighter' April, 19, 1991. Unpublished Works.
106. Ganda Singh, A Brief Account of The Sikh People Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee Sis ganj, Chandani Chowk, Delhi. P24
107. Summary of Makhan Singh's Trade union activities. 'Late Makhan Singh, A Trade Unionist and Great Freedom Fighter April, 19, 1991. Unpublished Works.

CHAPTER FOUR

5.0 THE SIKHS' POLITICAL ROLE IN KENYA 1890 - 1963

5.1 The Influence Of The Indian Political Struggles To The Sikhs Political Role

The Sikhs' political role in Kenya can be divided into two distinct periods. The first period started 1900 to early 1940s' and the second period beginning thereafter to 1963. In the first four decades, the Sikhs' political activities in Kenya were influenced with the Indian political struggles. Apart from Makhan Singh, whose political career began in 1930's, as seen in the previous chapter, there was no other Sikh whose political stature was so outstanding as to dwarf Makhan Singh's role. The factors which influenced the Sikhs' initial political behaviour were diverse, amongst them was their limited number. At the turn of the 20th century, Sikhs who had migrated to Kenya were few and sandwiched between larger Indian community. The census showed that the Sikhs and Hindus in 1911 were 3,205, by 1926, the Sikhs as a distinct group numbered 2,089 and by 1931, they had increased to 4,427¹. Many Sikh migrants were driven by economic gains and were least interested in politics. Though some of them were politically conscious, they lacked political experience.² Similarly initial Sikh migrants, came from Punjab where there was mutual-coexistence with the British.³ After the final Anglo-Sikh war in 1848-1849 up to 1915, the Sikhs and the British co-existed without major political controversy (discussed later in this chapter). The Namdharis whose interests were at variance with the British did not migrate to East Africa Protectorate in any significant numbers (see ch I). In Kenya like India Sikhs were security officers, others worked in various departments like public works, power and lighting, posts and telecommunications and the Railway service. Thus Sikhs had adjusted in the system particularly as security officers and consequently defended the system. Sikhs as immigrants were unsure of the state of affairs that was to follow the dissolution of the white government. In India, Sikhs struggled to assert their separate identity from other Indians, particularly the Muslims,⁴ consequently they did not wholly

rally together as a political entity. Sikhs in India had been betrayed in 1845/1846 and 1848/1849 during the Anglo-Sikh wars, the first and the second respectively. In turn the Sikhs had betrayed the Muslims and Hindus during the 1857 Mutiny.⁵ Sikhs thus had a tradition of political identity/isolation from other Indians this made the Sikhs remain autonomous in political realm. The Poorbias assisted the British to bring down the independence of Punjab. The Sikhs refused to support the mutiny because the mutineers had put their old foe a Muslim, Bahadur Shah (1837-1862) as the leader. Consequently the success of the mutiny would have brought their liberty under threat.⁶

However, this should not mean that the Sikhs were not nationalists in India. From the very beginning Sikhs were patriots. Maharaja Ranjit Singh re-united the Punjab, Baba Ram Singh (1862) of Namdharis, a sect of the Sikhs, much as its ideals were not universally shared among all Sikhs because of its doctrinal differences, they started the non co-operation movement. Ram Singh rejected British Schools, postal system and advised the followers to take their children in indigenous Schools, where they received instruction in mother tongue. Baba Ram Singh considered political freedom as part of religious freedom.⁷ Following the Namdhari movement was the Singh Sabha Movement (see ch. 1)⁸. The Singh Sabha unlike the Namdhari's enjoyed British patronage. It contributed to the creation of consciousness amongst Sikhs by emphasising the reformation of Sikhism to reflect the traditional Sikh faith then characterised by Sikhs, who were ready to sacrifice themselves for Sikh faith.⁹ The Sikhs', socio-religious movement in India paved way for a more militant nationalist movement. They contributed to the emergence of a middle class, through the integration of nationalistic ideals. The middle class were later excited by unimaginable defeat of Russia by an Asian state Japan in 1904¹⁰ who rose to demand for their freedom. The 1906 and 1907 political instability in the Punjab caused by the Sikh agriculturists, reflected Sikhs' nationalist attributes.¹¹ In 1906, the colonial government sought to curtail the rights of cultivators an event which

created tension between the agriculturists many of them Sikhs, and the British government. This led to the Sikhs' protests whose leader Ajit Singh was deported¹² because of his political activities. Nevertheless, the agitators succeeded in persuading the viceroy, Lord Minto to withhold, the sanction of the bill.¹³ In Nov. 1915, many Sikhs were murdered during the "Ghadarite movement" which coincided with the "Koma Gata maru"¹⁴, as they visited Canada. On this occasion the 376 Sikhs led by Gurdit Singh chartered a Japanese ship Koma - Gata - Maru (also called Guru Namak Jahaz) to sail to Canada. This was in order to comply with emigration requirements of Canada. However the Sikhs were not allowed to enter Canada neither were they allowed to go to Calcutta on their return to India. Instead the colonial police at Calcutta insisted that they leave for Punjab. As a result of the commotion that ensued between the police and the Sikhs there were 22 Sikhs killed others were rounded up and sent to Punjab where they were jailed. This became a powerful ground for the propagation of anti-colonial rule by the Sikhs. Those Sikhs who lost their lives included Kartan Singh Sarabha (Ludhiana), Bhai Bakshish Singh Gilwali (Amritsar), Bhai Surain Singh son of Ishar Singh (Amritsar) Harnam Singh and Shri Vishnu Ganesh Pingle of (Poona)¹⁵. Five years later, Sikhs' influenced by the 1919 Amritsar massacre popularly called 'Jullian walla Bagh stitch', joined the non co-operation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi on August, 1 1920. The non-co-operation movement was characterised by boycott of colonial courts, schools, foreign clothes and of the visit of Prince of Wales in 1921¹⁶. In 1922, Punjab provincial congress leader Sardar Kharak Singh was sentenced to five years because of his nationalistic attributes. Kharak Singh was accused of giving seditious speech. While in internment, Kharak Singh asserting freedom of dress refused to wear clothes from Dec. 1922 to June 1927, resisting the colonial government's orders, which prohibited prisoners from wearing black turbans or Gandhi cap (hat). In 1928 Kharak Singh objected to dominion status for India and demanded for total independence.

Meanwhile, though the Singh Sabha movement and the Namdhari Sabha had been major political movers in Sikhs' political history in India, their impact in Kenya's political realm was insignificant and they remained confined to religious affairs without major political overtones (see Chap I).

5.2 Factors Which Intertwined Sikhs' Political Behaviour With Indian Struggle In Kenya

Several antagonistic measures instituted by the colonial government in Kenya, to segregate Indians and white settlers forced Sikhs into Kenya's politics, but behind scenes. From the start of the 20th century, racism perpetuated by both Imperial government and white settlers enhanced common and identical political front between the Sikhs and the general Indian community.

The immigration regulations were racial in orientation and impact, affected the Sikhs as they did to other Indians. In 1902 for example, the white settlers petitioned the colonial government against further immigration of Indians to Kenya (then called East Africa Protectorate). A year later, in 1903, the white settlers from South Africa, who already had had experience of living with Indians, instigated the white settlers to pressurise the colonial government to stop further immigration of Indians. The white settlers from South Africa were aware of the persevering qualities of Indian in business. However, they concealed their feelings under the pretext that, the immigrants from Indian sub-continent to East Africa Protectorate would lead to unfair competition harming both Europeans and Africans (natives)¹⁷.

The white settlers merely humoured Africans with praises (because they were fur distanced in racial arrangement), saying that they were morally and physically more upright than the Indians. This was only to conceal their political and economic interest. The accusation by white settlers that Indians were suckers whose intent was to milk the colony and sent wealth back to their motherland, was similarly intended to justify the

prohibition of Sikhs like other Indians immigration to East Africa Protectorate. In 1900 and 1904 the commissioner of British East Africa Protectorate, Charles Elliot, was a proponent of racism policies which in effect provided unity between Sikhs and other Indians. Charles Elliot's policies opposed continued immigration of Indians to East Africa Protectorate under the pretext that the relationship between Indians and White settlers was strained.

In subsequent years from 1906 to 1955 the immigration regulation affected Sikhs as well kept them together with other Indians. The 1906, ordinance was described as having prohibited the immigration of paupers, lunatics and sick persons to East Africa Protectorate¹⁸ had a clause which provided for the deposit of 200 rupees from all immigrant. The stipulated sum of rupees to be paid, subjected all the Indian immigrant to a fee. Since, the regulation was racially designed it affected immigrants from Indian sub-continent amongst were Sikhs, Hindus and Indian Muslims. The enforcement of immigration regulation was a success of the white settlers against the immigrants from the Indian sub-continent and thus united them against Europeans.

The subsequent immigration regulations went along way to unite the Sikhs and other Indians into a political unit. The need by the White settlers to limit immigrants from Indian sub-continent was contained in the proposal of 1923 to institute more stringent condition to limit Indian immigrants. If the 1923 bill was implemented it would have affected all Indians, except the professionals, whose entry in Kenya was also subject to a number of factors, proof of qualification, confirmation from prospective employer in Kenya. The employer was also to prove to the immigration department that people of equal qualifications were locally not available and that labour imported was of significance to the colony. So, it was at the discretion of immigration department to either admit or reject the emigrant. Like the 1906 emigration ordinance, the immigrant was subjected to a fee. He was to deposit security equivalent to repatriation.¹⁹ The proposed

ordinance superficially aimed at limiting employment to the local population, however, the fact that, jobs were racially allotted and the lucrative ones to the white population, failed to evoke expected response. Instead, it was categorised as yet another racist efforts to curtail Indian's immigration into Kenya. The racial connotation in immigration laws was underscored in the views that, as the Indians were threatened by immigration restriction, the white immigrants continued to migrate into Kenya. Prior to 1923, in January 1919, at the convention of Associations, meeting consisting among others four Christian missionaries, it racially advocated for restriction of Indian immigrants, however, under the disguise of non-racial caption.²⁰

The immigration regulation, forced the Indian representatives in Kenya, irrespective of communal differences to appeal to the Indian viceroy, Lord Reading, to help them withdraw of immigration restrictions. In Dec. 1923 there were mass meetings at Mombasa in protest of immigration regulations. Protests against the bill attracted the attention of Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who in turn withdrew the bill. The Devonshire white paper of July 1923, had recommended that

Only in extreme circumstances could His Majesty's government contemplate legislation designed to exclude from a British colony immigrants from any other part of the British Empire²¹

Nevertheless, the Devonshire white paper of 1923 did not put an end to the white settlers' pressure on the colonial government against prohibition of immigrants from Indian Sub-continent as witnessed in subsequent years. In 1944 for example, colonial government in Kenya took advantage of the Defence regulations which had been instituted to prohibit entry of non male African immigrants to Kenya during the 2nd world war period except with a permit, ²² and applied them to limit immigrants from India. In October, the following year, at the 17th session of the East Africa Indian National Congress, an appeal was made, asking the colonial government to drop the Defence Regulation. In February 1946, the Defence Regulation for the war period was changed into permanent law.

The concerted Indian outcry over the immigration regulation in 1940's went beyond Ocean and attracted the attention of the Indian nationalists. The Indian colonial government in turn sent a delegation in August 1946 led by a Sikh, Maharaja Singh. Unfortunately, the delegates failed to come to an agreement, with the Kenyan Indians over the immigration regulations whose wording were not racial and were to apply to all non-African races. However, its racial bias came out, when the regulation was implemented on August 1 1948.²³ It was marked by general reduction of immigrants from India. In the years 1949 and 1955, there was stability of European population despite their low rate of immigration. Indians' whose rate of immigration tripled that of European British subjects prior to 1949 reduced. Much as there were many application for immigration from Indians many were denied.²⁴ Thus, the racial immigration regulations put the Sikhs with the rest of the Indians into a racial community and hence characterised their reaction to the racial immigration laws that favoured the Europeans.

The introduction and use of Indian institutions in what became Kenya provided the Sikhs and other Indians a common political, social and economic identity. The efforts of the colonial government to repudiate and substitute Indian institutions that they had put in place since the beginning of colonial rule in Kenya evoked racism from the Sikhs as it applied to all Indians. The company, British East Africa, later named IBEA (after it was given a royal charter) and East Africa Protectorate from 1895 applied Indian commercial law. Indian company law, the Indian Stamp Act, the Indian Invention Act and Design Act, the Indian Insolvent Act including Indian Land Acquisition act, Explosive and Petroleum Act, Indian Currency and Postal System Act. In 1905 while emphasising racism, the white settlers demanded for replacement of Indian regulations with English common law. Indian institutions put in operation by both the company and the British colonial government were used as the basis for Indians assertion in Kenya. In 1920, when the colonial government withdrew the Indian rupee²⁵ it was perceived by the Indians as a step towards

the transfer of power to the white settlers. In that year, Lord Delamere while referring to the change of currency from Indian rupee to a Shilling ridiculed the Indians who had hopes of making Kenya their Colony. He argued that, it would have been an idiotic move by the colonial government to change the currency, if the Colony, was to become an Indian's Colony.²⁶ The change of name, from East Africa Protectorate to Kenya Colony in July 1920²⁷ was seen by the Indians' as racist steps coupled with intention of turning East Africa Protectorate to a white dominated state.

Sir Harry Johnston had made similar observations in 1899 regarding the immigration of Indians to East Africa.²⁸ However, he did not forecast the racial animosity which came to be associated with the importation of Indian code of law. It never occurred to him for example that, it was to form the basis for the unity of people from the Indian sub-continent and a ground for the Indians to petition the colonial government over the control of Kenya. Winston Churchill while on the visit of Africa in 1907, argued that the Indians had more rights of being in East Africa Protectorate, unlike white settler particularly those who had come from South Africa.²⁹

The Sikhs, with other Indians in Kenya were united on the land question. The racial land laws affected Sikhs more because they had come from a rural and agricultural background and harboured ambition to cultivate land. Two thirds of the Sikhs had left their homeland as a result of lack of land, or the acreage was un-economic for agricultural production.³⁰ From the turn of the 20th century, the colonial government instituted land regulations, which favoured white population. The Crowns Land Ordinance of 1902, was racist. It allowed white settlers to exchange land up to 100 acres among themselves (that was amongst whites). At the same time, the commissioner was given immense powers to alienate any size of land even under African settlement for the white race. On September 14, 1903 Sir Charles Elliot instructed the land officer not to give land to the Indians in the region between Machakos and Fort Ternan.³¹ In November 1904 Donald Steward

appointed a land committee whose membership were all white, with Lord Delamere as chairman three white judges and two committee members nominated by the white settlers. Though the committee interviewed an Indian witness, it never took Indians' plight into consideration. The resolutions of the committee reflected its racist membership. It recommended segregation in residential land allocation for the whites and Indians. The committee resolved that only the Highland was suitable for European settlement.³² Apart from racial connotation the resolution was derogatory, implying that unlike the Europeans who could not settle anywhere the Indians could regardless of the adverse weather. Lord Elgin in 1906 appeared to be racial to the Sikhs and other Indians when he concurred with Delamere's report. He agreed to the reservation of white highland for the white settlers³³. In 1908, Elgin sanctioned the reservation of White Highland. He argued that it was to ease administration.³⁴

Meanwhile, following the resolution of Delamere's land committee's report of 1905, another white Col. Montgomery headed another land board whose resolution encouraged racism. He decided in favour of the white settlers at disadvantage of Indian and of Sikhs.³⁵ Consequently the land board had recommended the settlement of Indian in the lowlands³⁶.

Meanwhile, the Sikhs, on account of their adventurous attributes and eagerness to venture in agriculture, settled at Kibos, a low land area near Kisumu (see Chap II). The 1915 land ordinance further prohibited inter-racial land transaction without the Governor's veto. Earlier in 1908, Governor Percy Gerouard had advocated the introduction of a similar clause giving the Governor veto power over inter-racial transfer of land. In 1913 a special committee had recommended against inter racial transfers of land without Governors' veto.³⁷

The 1915 ordinance made the inter-racial land transactions enforceable in law. It withdrew the powers of an individual over ownership of land to that of the race. Four years

later, the colonial government refused to consider Indian ex-soldiers for allocation of free land. This was unfair to the Sikhs because their number was conspicuous among the Indian soldiers.³⁸ During the first world war, Sikhs had contributed towards salvaging East Africa Protectorate for the British. After the start of the war on August 14, 1914 the Germans (at that time in Tanganyika, called German East Africa) entered East Africa Protectorate. The military reinforcements from India (many of them Sikhs) helped the British to repulse Germans, not without heavy casualties.³⁹ After the war there were racial outbursts questioning efficacy of each race. Espeth Huxley appeared to dismiss the Indians' on grounds that Africans who led them did not understand their language. The Indian soldiers neither understood nor spoke African languages. He also attributed their weakness to failure of adaptation to the thick tropical forests.⁴⁰ Mervyn F. Hill asserted along same premises. That Indians were inefficient in war because of the unfavourable climate.⁴¹ Lord Delamere and Kenneth Archer down played the Indian role by believing that strength was inherent in numbers. They argued that not many local Indians were involved.⁴² While Gregory, R.G. appraised the Indian role.

The transcending thread running against all arguments was racism. The right perspective with regard to the war, was to note, that the war was between the British and the Germans, and not between Indians and Germans. Consequently the Sikhs' like other Indians' role was supportive. In any case who was to blame, the British or the Indian soldiers brought from different climatic conditions to fight in an unfavourable environment, where they were un- accustomed to, worse still among people whose language they did not understand. In fairness to the Sikhs their efficiency did not lie in racial compartmentalisation but their fight as a British unit against the Germans. The above writers compartmentalised the performance of each race in order to apportion blame and unleash their preconceived racial sentiments. The Sikhs military role remained

spectacular both in India and abroad. In National Book Trust publications of Indian Army (1961) judges the Sikhs military role worth mentioning;

The Sikh soldier wears the crown of immortality. You may scan in vain the pages of modern History to find heroism so remarkable, courage so reckless or gallantry so unique⁴³

In India's nationalistic struggle Sikhs shed most blood, out of 2125 martyrs for freedom, 1557 or 75% were Sikhs, out of 2646 imprisoned for life, 2147 were Sikhs out of 127 Indians sent to the gallows 92 were Sikhs. In Subhash Bose's Army of 20,000, 12000 were Sikhs.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that, unlike in India the Sikhs did not protest as a community against the denial of land to ex-soldiers. Instead some Sikh soldiers moved through rugged terrain and settled in Meru,⁴⁵ and other areas including the Masai areas of Kenya, where they ventured into trade. While others were employed by the Railway Authority.

The Devonshire white paper of 1923 did not settle the land question in Kenya either. It retained the status of the White Highlands. In part, it stated;

-----after reviewing the history of this question and taking into consideration the fact that during the last 15 years, European British subjects have been encouraged to develop the Highlands, and that during that period, the settlers have taken up land in the Highlands, on this understanding, His Majesty's government has decided that the existing practice must be maintained as regards initial grants and transfers.⁴⁶

Neither did, the Parliamentary Select Committee of 1931 solve the land question. In 1939, land politics got a new life. An Order in Council was passed, which formally led to demarcation of the White Highlands. A White Highland board was set up, it consisted of seven members some nominated by the Governor while others were appointed by the legislative council whose majority were white.⁴⁷ The Sikhs like other Indians were disillusioned. Consequently they united with other Indians in resisting its implementation. The 1939 protests led to the declaration of a 'hartal' strike by the East Africa Indian National Congress. Many Indians irrespective of their religious affiliations took part in the 'hartal' because of the racial overtones of the law. Six years later a Sikh politician Bhogal

Singh at Mombasa, blamed the white settlers and the colonial government, who, under cover of African trusteeship had alienated land belonging to the Africans, relegated them to infertile land, restricted them to growing certain crops and not others for example tea, coffee, cotton. It also enhanced squatter labour through the Kipande System (African Identification certificate System).

In 1948 at the 18th session of the East African Indian National Congress (whose Sikh and Hindu membership was conspicuous), the land question was part of agenda. Two years later, the East African Indian National Congress, decried the White Highlands policy, which ensured land reservation for the white's howsoever under-utilised, the Sikhs were confined to the lowlands. The land questions in Kenya kept the Sikhs like other Indians in Kenya's politics until 1963, when the land registration act overrode all racial land laws and racial land allocation. Members of the Sikh community bought land from the white settlers when they left Kenya on the eve of independence.⁴⁸

The formation of political parties on racial lines starting with whites political association from the beginning of the 20th century politically united races into political units. This was because racial political parties were associated with racial demands which, were made in disfavour of others. Sikhs were thus encouraged to join other Indians political realm. This was advantageous to them because of their inferior numerical strength. Sikhs were also distinct and isolated in foreign land and they had a common enemy with other Indians. At Mombasa where there was the first all Asian political party, the Sikhs had no alternative but to identify themselves with the Mombasa Indian Association at that time led by L.M. Salve and two brothers, T.M and A.M, Jeevanjee. In 1906, Sikhs at Nairobi identified themselves with other Indians in Nairobi's Indian Association. In 1907, the Sikhs political interest like that of other Indians were represented in the Indian political organisation the British East Africa Indian Association.⁴⁹ On the other hand the white settlers had already established their exclusive political organisation.

The settler's political Association was formed as early as 1902. By the end of the same year, they formed the Colonists Association. In 1903, the European's Colonist Association was substituted by the European Planters Association. In 1904, colonists association was revived and it remained the white's major political party till 1910 when, the white settlers formed the Convention of Association.⁵⁰

Consequently, the initial political unity among major Indian communities in East Africa Protectorate and the emergence of rivalry politics with white settlers political association, set in motion the process of constitutional development in Kenya. From the start of the Legislative Council in East Africa Protectorate, the white settlers had organised themselves politically. They manipulated the decision making process and thus influenced legislation to their advantage. The Legislative Council of 1907 in East Africa Protectorate consisted of only Europeans, six official and two non-officials. The Sikhs' unity and other Indians and their concerted pressure for political representation was responded to by the appointment of A.M. Jeevanjee to the Legislative Council towards the end of 1909. He represented all Indians irrespective of Indian's religio-communal differences. This became a forum for all Indians' agitation at the centre. This was in contrast with Sikhs in Indian politics, who demanded for their exclusive representation to counter Muslims pressure for communal representation.⁵¹ In India, the Sikhs, under auspices of chief Khalsa Diwan, and the Indian Muslim league competed for communal representations. The white Governor of Punjab encouraged Sikhs' communal politics.⁵²

The Morley Minto reform of 1909 in India had no effect on the Sikh politics in Kenya. In India Sikhs' request for separate representation was musled by the majority communities, the Hindus and Muslims.

In March, 1914, the Kenyan Sikhs were not on the forefront in the formation of the major Indian political organisation, East Africa Indian National Congress (EAINC), where T.M Jeevanjee was president.⁵³ A.M Jeevanjee, Allidina Visram (the most enterprising

Asian of his time), and Mr. and Mrs. Salve were officials. Others included Luxman Thakur and Kesaval V. Dwivedi. The Sikhs, however, did not dissociate from (EAINC) partly because it was formed to fight racial policies forced on people from the Indian sub-continent. The demands made by EAINC reflected this background. Their demands included repudiation of imperial government's regulations, like the reservation of white highlands for Europeans, racially determined allotment of seats in the train, as was in the Legislative Council. In that year, Indians demanded for three seats to represent them at the Coast, Highland and Nyanza. Practically up to 1940 the EAINC represented Sikhs as other Indians.

The white settlers, after 1915, forged ahead with their demand for residential and commercial segregation, and for the domination in the legislative councils. This led the settlement of Sikhs along other Indians as a racially segregated community by the white settlers and the colonial government. Thus the segregation united Sikhs with other Indians. The 1916 and 1917 demands by Nairobi Indian Association and the Mombasa Indian Association for increased Indian representation in the Legislative Council aimed at representing the interests of all Indians regardless of religious affiliations. On the other hand, in 1919, the white settlers demanded exclusion of all people of Indian extraction (inclusive of Sikhs) from the White Highlands and any increment in their representation in the Legislative Council was opposed. They pressurised for the restriction of Indian representatives to two nominated seats. Limiting of Indian immigrants to Kenya, and suspension of legal reforms which affected the Indians.⁵⁴ There were racial outbursts unleashed by white settlers to all the Indians.⁵⁵ The economic commission appointed in 1917 to design an economic frame-work for the colony after first World War over-stepped its limits. It racially recommended for segregation of Indians as a race because of hygiene⁵⁶. The racial sentiments by the economic commission which described the Indians as indifferent to sanitation was racist and evoked heated racial response from Indians

regardless of their religious affiliations⁵⁷. The white settlers went to discard all Indian religions Islam, Hinduism including Sikhism; and portrayed Christianity as the only religion with repository of knowledge. The Christians, were according to white settlers, rightfully in Kenya unlike those communities from the East whose inclusion were Sikhs.⁵⁸

The Convention of Association referring to Indians by their profession as Artisans (most of whom Sikhs), traders and clerks, described them as repugnant and inimical to Africans.⁵⁹ At the same time the convention of Association declared that;

-----the right of self determination rests with the European government of this country acting for the Europeans in trust for the native peoples and should ask the Secretary of State to rule that the position should not be prejudiced by giving any system of franchise to Asiatics, nor by allowing them to acquire land except in townships on short leases, nor by the employment of Asiatics in government works, and that steps should be taken to restrict Asiatic's immigration in order that this stronghold of European colony in Central Africa, may stand beside her sister colonies.⁶⁰

The Indians' political parties prior to the emergence of communal political organisations addressed all Indians as people of common race, geographical origin and this included Sikhs because of their Indian origin. Thus, they were comprehensive enough and as representative of the Sikhs, as they were for other Indians. Their aims were retaliations to the racial background and were above religious communal groupings reflected in the India's political scene of the same period. During this period the Indians demanded equal seats with the Europeans in the Legislative Council, abolition of segregation regulations with regard to land, ownership of property and equal pay with the Europeans in employment.

Influencing the Sikhs political participation and behaviour within the same period was the drawing of the Indian nationalists to the Kenya's Indian question. This in turn forced the Indian viceroy react to the Indian's situation in Kenya⁶¹. The reaction to the Kenyan situation blunted the socio-religious differences among Indians and integrated them as people from common geographical origin. This went a long way to ensure their common political identity with other Indians for example in 1920. Indian's agitation in

Kenya drew both the attention of the Indian Viceroy and that of the colonial secretary Milner. The colonial secretary, proposed two elective seats for the Indians in the Legislative Council⁶², on the communal roll, lifting of immigration restrictions, however, retained the previous exclusive rights of white settlers over the White Highlands and segregation in townships⁶³. The Indians refused to elect the two legislative members.

The Sikhs rallied behind the EAINC. The Indian Viceroy sent a delegation led by Robert Benjamin and, on the basis of the report received from Kenya,⁶⁴ reacted verbally, without back -up of action to persuade Kenya's white political establishment. Otherwise, he objected to the allotment of the two seats assigned to the Indians. The Viceroy opposed communal representation, which could enhance racial hatred and animosity. He proposed a common electoral roll, franchise with property qualification and education test without racial bias. He also opposed racial segregation based on sanitation by arguing that established sanitary standards could be reached by Indians as long as there was accountable use of municipal revenue. This was however a political gimmick by the Indian viceroy to quell the nationalist protests in India. The irony was where as the Indian Viceroy condemned communal representation, unequal representation in the Legislative Council between the whites and Indians in Kenya India's political administrative structures was equally discriminative of the Indians.

The Sikhs' political unity with other Indians in 1921 and 1923 was, enhanced by the opposition between Indian association EAINC and the Convention of Association. In May 1921, at a Round Table conference was presided over by Governor Northey and was attended by members of Convention Association. At the meeting Indians racially demanded for equal representation with the white settlers in the Legislative Council, and common franchise.⁶⁵ The Convention of Association members in pursuance of racial ideals against the Indians demanded that the Governor remain racial and approached matter from the same point of view. The Convention of Association members under the pretext of

catering for the African welfare (when in actual fact they were looking for a way to win imperial support), argued that if franchise was given to Indians, it was also to be extended to the natives.⁶⁶

The Sikhs' unity with other Indians in 1922 was influenced by Winston Churchill's dinner speech, attended among others by Delamere, and Lt. Colonel Griffiths. Churchill supported the reservation of White Highlands by the Europeans, tightening of Indian immigration regulation. He declared that, the British government's wish was to make Kenya distinctly their Colony, moving towards white self- government⁶⁷. In part, read;

We do not contemplate settlement or system which will prevent Kenya becoming a characteristically and distinctly British colony, looking forward in the full fruition of time to responsible self government.⁶⁸

Churchill, though aware of the impact of the statement, arrogantly endeared the Indians by promising them equal status as long as they strove to attain civilisation to merge that of the Europeans.⁶⁹

Meanwhile opposition to Churchill's dinner speech proposals prevented its implementation and paved way for another forum to settle the Indian question in Kenya.

Between 1921 and 1922, the Sikhs' political behaviour and participation in Kenya, was also influenced by racist politics which emerged between the white settlers and Indians. These policies forced the white settlers to begin preparing for violence against the Indians. During this period, the imperial government was pushed to the wall by the state of animosity in Kenya. A secret inter-departmental meeting between, the under-secretary of State of India and Edward Wood, under-secretary of State for colonies was held.⁷⁰ The results of the meeting of "Wood-Winterton" supposed to be secret leaked and evoked unity between Sikhs and other Indian communities resident in Kenya because of their racial background, as they were in disfavour of the white settlers. Edward Wood and Winterton had resolved in favour of what the Indians had clamoured for years, common electoral roll with property qualification and education test, four elective seats for the Indians to the

Legislation Council and lifting of Indian immigration. Their intent to placate white settlers was underscored in the resolution that the White Highlands be retained by the Europeans.⁷¹

The resolutions displeased the Europeans who proceeded to prepare for war⁷² to prevent their implementation. The white settlers set up a vigilant committee to mobilise forces. The imperial government was forced to summon representatives of the Indians and white settler to London in 1923. Africans were represented by a missionary. The results of the conference were published as Devonshire White Paper of July, 1923. The resolution set in motion a new political scene in Kenya. The Indian delegates to the 1923 July conference included A. M. Jeevanjee, B. S Varma and H. S Virjee. They were representatives of all Indians without religious affiliations. Neither, the Sikh nor Muslims nor Hindus raised demands for communal interests. The Indians, as a community were given five seats to the Legislative Council. This bound the Sikhs and other Indians together. The white settlers were given majority of the seats on communal roll. The African interest, at least in principle were made paramount, and relegated the European and Indian competition, at least in theory below that of the Africans. Thus the concerted Sikh and Indian communal politics and its antagonism with white settlers paved way for the emergence of the third neglected party, the African people. Following, the Devonshire White Paper, the Sikhs like other Indians refused to pay tax in 1924.

The aftermath of racist imbalance fostered by the Devonshire White Paper influenced the Sikhs to identify with other Indians whose objectives included the safeguarding of their rights on political realm, particularly under the EAINC. Three years after the Devonshire White Paper, for example, Sikhs like other Indians were affected by a racist increase of poll tax. It increased from 30 to 50⁷³. Thus Governor Grigg had started to overlook the provisions of Devonshire White Paper⁷⁴, as such appeared anti Sikhs as he was anti- Indian community. This policy offended Asians as it entrenched communal division.⁷⁵ Indian's as a race were equally suspicious of Governor Grigg's advocacy for

self government of East Africa territories. Which was to be accompanied by bringing in Europeans of all classes to set up a white state.⁷⁶

The politics of closer union, first propounded by Governor Grigg in the 1920's kept the Sikhs and other Indians united upto the 1940's. Channan Singh, D.D. Puri, Bachulal Gathari and Ramesh Gautama represented Indians, While T. Mbotela and B.A. Ohanga representing Africans jointly made an effort of resisting the implementation of the inter-territorial Regulation Colonial. 210⁷⁷. The attempts of the two groups followed the revival of the politics of inter-territorial organisation in East Africa in 1945. Colonial. 210, replaced Non –Parliamentary Paper No. 191⁷⁸, which made provision for the administration of East Africa territories under His Majesty's government without political union, with equal racial representation at the central assembly. Where as Colonial 210, replaced the provision for racial equality and made provision for a central legislative body for East Africa territories.⁷⁹ Each territory of East Africa was to be represented by five members, one an official, the other selected by the Legislative Council members whose majority were Europeans. Thus the white settlers were assured of getting the extra six members. The Indians and Africans opposed Colonial Regulation. 210 because it provided for an open majority for the Europeans by at least two to the central assembly.⁸⁰ Since, Europeans were a majority, they had an advantage over others with regard to decisions that involved voting. Despite the resistance by Channan Singh and African representatives the Regulation Colonial. 210, became operative at the start of 1948.

Thus, the Sikhs political impact in Kenya was largely interwoven in the general Indian political struggles. Their alliance with other Indians was enhanced by racial compartmentalisation of Kenyan politics. The political, economic and social organisation of Kenya was racially arranged, hence, racial domination expressed on land allocation, distribution of opportunities in the government, with regard to acquisition of power and

economic avenues overshadowed the Sikhs' political role to appear closer to that of a larger Indian society. This was, however, not without elements of communal assertion.

5.3 The Origins Of The Sikhs' Communal Politics And Its Impact In Kenya

Sikhs' communal politics is used here to mean the consciousness and unity amongst the Sikhs, which emanated from their common language, religion and script and became a determinant for their political behaviour. In India, like in Kenya, the rivalry between Muslims and Sikhs over representation in the legislative council led to, and fuelled the emergence of communal politics. In the wake of colonialism the Ethnic politics in India acquired new dimensions as it was fuelled and influenced by the British' 'divide and rule policy'. This part of chapter seeks to bring to light the Muslims influence to the emergence of Sikhs; communal politics in Kenya alongside Sikhs' communal politics in India citing its relationship and impact.

In Kenya the Sikhs political role was conditioned by, alien environment, their limited numbers, the British colonial policy and the repercussions of Indian politics. In colonial India the Muslim/Sikh rivalry started gaining momentum in 1909. Sikhs, like the Muslims demanded separate representation in India's legislative council but only Muslims were granted separate seats in 1909. This strengthened the Sikhs' clamour for representation. In Kenya it was not till early 1940s, that the Muslims' demand for separate representation which had started earlier, acquired significance. In the long run it fragmented Indian political unity in Kenya however not at the same magnitude, as it happened in India. The British colonial government in Kenya as in India aggravated Indians' communal rivalry for their divide and rule policy.

The time the Sikhs manifested violent anti-colonial politics in Kenya was in early part of 1940's. The three Sikh youths⁸¹ murdered an Indian, former nationalist, Isher Dass, who had turned collaborator. Isher Dass had been appointed and made responsible for the implementation of conscription order, The Defence (Indian Artisan) Regulation and Defence Employment (Indian Clerks) Regulation⁸² instituted in 1942. The two-defence regulations were however not intended to conscript Sikhs alone but all Indians. The Sikhs,

many of them artisans, were affected by the two regulations. Artisans were denied exit permit from the colony unless proof was produced to the satisfaction of the colonial authority showing that reasons for their departure were not only urgent but genuine⁸³

Prior to his appointment, Isher Dass had been a radical nationalist, who championed not only Indian political cause but multi-racial politics. In 1939 he represented KCA and KPTA, (African political organisation). He presented their grievances against White Highland Order in Council of 1939' in the Legislative Council⁸⁴. By 1942, Isher Dass had deviated from radicalism towards being a collaborator of the British. Sikhs working in solidarity with other Indians resisted the conscription orders. On April 26, 1942, at a meeting held at Play House Nairobi, Isher Dass' efforts to explain the implications of conscription orders was marred by hurling of abuse, stones and sticks. The meeting ended in disarray. As Isher Dass left the meeting hall, the crowd that had gathered outside tried to lynch him. He escaped with a damaged car⁸⁵. On Nov 6, 1942, the disappointed three Sikh youths, whose immigration had been denied by the defence regulation, retaliated on Isher Dass. Balwant Singh, Swaran Singh and Harbux Singh shot and killed Dass on Nov 6 1942. The assailants were accused of murder and convicted.

Sikhs in Kenya remember the incident with nostalgia. They point out that the three assailants were martyrs because the fight was against injustice. The Sikh assailants sought to liberate the oppressed, a deed emphasised in Sikhism. The assailants were accorded martyrdom because they obeyed a religious call. Apart from depicting solidarity with the assailants opposition to conscription orders, the heroes' burial accorded to the youths was a direct reflection of the Sikhs martial and fearless attributes towards oppression. Guru Nanak had awakened the Sikhs to political consciousness. He rebuked the rulers of his time, calling them butchers and cruel, whose sense of duty had failed them. Nanak's teaching accordingly inspired the sense of political liberty among the Sikhs. Guru Hargobind sixth Sikh Guru transformed the Sikhs into a militant and spiritual community.

Guru Tegh Behadur ninth Sikh Guru, died a martyr in defence of the Hindu religious signs *Tilak* and *Janeau* thus laying down his life against Muslim repressive laws. Guru Gobind Rai (later named Gobind Singh) the tenth Sikh Guru recommended that in the event of other means failing it was justifiable to draw the sword. Banda Singh, the Sikh leader appointed by the tenth Sikh Guru, set an example for revenge against oppression. He murdered the killers of the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh and refused to succumb to Mughals oppressive rulers⁸⁶. In the 1730's, the Sikhs again demonstrated their zeal for martyrdom. Much as they were threatened by death if they entered their Temple and Tank at Amritsar, they went to seek martyrdom as they defied the authorities;

The Sikh horsemen were seen riding at full gallop towards their favourite shrine of devotion they were often slain in making this attempt and sometimes taken prisoner but they used, on such occasion, to seek, instead of avoiding the crown of martyrdom⁸⁷

Sikhs' sacrifice for their community's survival in India did not stop in the 18th or 19th century but continued into the 20th century. For example in August 1922, following the government's arrest and conviction of the Sikh volunteers, who cut firewood for pilgrims and other Mayfair, they retaliated by offering themselves for arrest and torture⁸⁸. While making a comment with regard to the above, a white Rev. C. F. Andrews (a close associate of M.K. Gandhi) commented:

"A new heroism, learnt through suffering has arisen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world

In essence the reaction and the response of the Sikh community to the three assailants was not outside the context of Sikhism. Isher Dass' past political career was overshadowed as a result of associating with the Europeans oppressive regulation.

In subsequent years, after 1942 the Sikhs got involved in separatist politics, which partly facilitated the disintegration of East Africa Indian National Congress. The unity of the Sikh and Hindu enhanced Muslim isolation starting 1942, following the enactment of municipal elections ordinance. According to the 1942, election of Indian members to the

Nairobi Municipal Council (Validation) ordinance, the municipality of Nairobi was divided in seven wards, to be represented by Indians⁸⁹. Like the India's Lucknow pact of 1916(referred to below), the Indian Muslim and Hindus (Sikhs counted amongst them) in pursuance of politics of compromise agreed that municipal wards be divided in a way to satisfy communal interest. The wards were divided into four non-Muslims and three Muslims areas.⁹⁰ Eastleigh, Parklands and Nairobi Central wards were chosen as Muslims wards. However, when the election were held, Sikhs and Hindus united. They not only voted out Muslim candidates but also secured all the seats of the seven wards⁹¹. Breach of agreement jeopardised Sikh-Hindu and Muslim's inter-ethnic political relationships.

Sikhs' politics of self-assertion in Kenya took the same course but in conformity to Kenyan situation. Sikhs' initial role of behind scenes in the years 1890 and 1940 had aligned them with other Indians and the Hindu-dominated East Africa Indian National Congress. Muslims pressure for communal representation in Kenya, as happened in India, provoked the Sikhs to demand for similar provision. That is during India's nationalistic struggle, between 1909 and 1935 Sikhs politics in India was influenced by Muslims demand for separate representations. This in turn, forced the Sikhs to make similar demands for separate representations by adopting the democratic argument. They asserted that they were for separate representations if the Muslims were granted. From 1909 Sikhs' request for separate political representation in the legislative council was muscled by the Hindus or Muslims starting with the Morley-Minto law reform⁹². In 1916, the Lucknow pact was signed between All India Muslim League and India National Congress. The two sidelined the Sikhs and agreed to separate Muslim representation in seven states where the Muslims were a minority. The Muslims were given a half of the seats in Punjab and one third of the seats in the Central Legislative council. The Chief Khalsa Diwan distanced himself from the Lucknow Pact. He wrote to the Chief Secretary, stating:

... they would not concede to a constitution which did not guarantee to them (Sikhs) a share in the provincial and imperial

councils as well as in the civil administration of the country with due regard to their status before the annexation of Punjab, their present state in the Council and their past and present service to the empire.⁹³

Four years later during the Motangu-Chelmsford meeting of 1919, the Sikhs forged ahead with same demand for separate seats if Muslims were accorded.⁹⁴ They maintained their stand in 1927, in the memorandum to Simon Commission they stated that:

While anxious to maintain their individuality as a separate community they (Sikhs) are always ready to co-operate with their sister communities for the development of a united nation. They would be therefore the first to welcome a declaration that no consideration caste or religion shall affect the matter of organisation of a national government in the country. They are prepared to stand on merit alone provided they (Sikhs) in common with others are permitted to grow unhampered by any impediments in the way of reservation for any other community

⁹⁵

Though Asian Muslims in Kenya had started their politics of separatism earlier, it did not provoke the Sikhs until the first half of 1940's, when it was intensified. Indian-Muslims became conspicuously separatist from 1927, when a Muslim, A.H Malik was included on the official electoral roll by a group, which had broken away from the EAINC. This was in disregard to the Congress repudiation of European electoral process and the boycott the Congress had put in place. The demand by the Congress that Malik resigns made him delink from the non co-operation movement as non-Muslims.⁹⁶ In 1932, Muslims had withdrawn from the Congress protesting the election results in which all the five seats were occupied by the Hindus. Though they later joined the Congress the seeds of separatism had been sown never to be uprooted. Initially, it was between Muslims and Hindu dominated EAINC, but later evoked Sikhs communal protest. In the first half of 1940's the Muslims dissociated themselves from the Sikh-Hindu dominated East Africa Indian National Congress, citing a rather lopsided reason, that the Gujaratis monopolised trade.⁹⁷ This accusation was unrealistic because the Gujaratis like the Muslims' relied on market forces. The colonial government had introduced and sustained an open economic

system. The accusation carried with it the legacies of India's communal politics and was a pointer to pursuance of separatist political stand. As mentioned above the Muslims, during India's communal politics with the Hindus (whose definition according to them included the Sikhs) influenced the Sikhs' political behaviour. The objection of Indian Muslims in Kenya to raising funds from all Indians in Kenya by EAINC, and in turn sponsor the activities of Sikh-Hindu Indian National Congress,⁹⁸ originated in India's communal political policies. Thus, Sikhs in Kenya as was in India, had higher affiliations with the Indian National Congress, than the Muslims.

In 1945, the Sikh-Hindu political unity was jeopardised when the Muslims separatism got expressed with establishing of a political organisation called Central Muslim Association. It held its first conference⁹⁹ in mid December, the same year, the Nairobi Muslim members of Hindu dominated 'Nairobi Indian Association' (NIA), left the Association for Hindus and Sikhs.¹⁰⁰ At the same time in India, the Muslim League leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah, had become vocal over the partition of Indian sub continent along religious lines, he asserted:

It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time. The Hindu and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither intermarry, nor inter-dine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions-----¹⁰¹

Similar sentiments were expressed by Kenyan Indian Muslims in 1945. Since the time of Sikh Gurus, more specifically, the death of fifth Guru marked the beginning of enmity between the Sikhs and Muslims. Guru Arjun was killed by Jehangir a Mughal ruler on what Sikhs regard as frame-up charges of non-payment of tax and vilifying Islam. As a result of continued animosity between the two (Sikhs and Muslims) the Sikhs retaliated by

prohibiting their women flock from getting married to the Muslims¹⁰². They similarly rejected meat where animals had been slaughtered in the Muslim way. The Hindus and Sikhs in Kenya like in India were politically closer compared to Hindus and Muslims because of their historical past, and they were perceived by Indian Muslim as not only politically together but also culturally, and socially linked. Sikhism was classified as a Hindu sect.¹⁰³ All India Muslim League demonstrated animosity to the Sikhs and Hindus equally which enhanced Sikh/Hindu political identity. Sikhs shared cultural traits with the Hindus, which also bound them.

In Kenya as India the Sikh-Hindu relationship endured as long as the Hindus endorsed and supported the Sikhs' suppression of Muslims demand for separate representation. In 1946, Gian Singh influenced by Indian communal politics formed the Young Sikh Society¹⁰⁴. Though his objective was to promote Sikh unity among the Indians, the name of his organisation "The Young Sikh Society" carried with it sparks of ethnicity within the understanding of Indian ethnic politics.¹⁰⁵ Thus Gian Singh's effort to unite the Indians, aroused Sikhs' religious affiliations.

In December, 1946, the Sikhs acting as a catalysts in India's communal politics, enhanced the break up of (EAINC) by objecting to a plan designed to placate the Muslims and win them back to the congress. In that year, the Congress Legislative Council members had reached a consensus over the balance of India's communal representation equation. Members had agreed that all aspirants for the municipal and Legislative Council were to be approved by the regional Indian's association.¹⁰⁶ The Sikhs aiming to counter Muslims separatist intentions, also looking for an opportunity to assert their demand objected to this move describing it as not in line with democratic principles and smacking of separatist. On the periphery the move was undemocratic but communally unifying. Sikhs in Kenya like those in India during 1930 Round Table Conference threatened to demand for the same reservation on the two bodies, the Legislative Council and Municipal

Council, if the Muslims were granted.¹⁰⁷ As seen above, in India, the Sikhs opposed institutionalisation of Muslims separate representation at all constitutional reform forums starting 1909 up to 1947. At the Second Round Table Conference in 1930 for example, Ujjal Singh (Sikh representative) had argued in similar line, that the Sikhs were in agreement with joint electorates, but if separate representation was given to any community the Sikhs would insist on getting it as well.¹⁰⁸ In 1946 and 1947, negotiations the Sikhs, led by Tara Singh rejected Mohammed Ali Jinnah's offer for a separate Sikh state in Pakistan.¹⁰⁹

A.B. Patel a member of Kenya's Legislative Council fearing for the unity of the Congress, and the likely danger that would have befallen the Congress if the Sikhs split away, declared readiness to leave the Legislative Council for a Sikh¹¹⁰ was in line with Sikh-Hindu politics in India.

The events, which preceded partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, aggravated the poor relationships between the Sikhs and Muslims. In 1947 the Sikhs' political role and behaviour in Kenya was influenced by India's freedom struggles. The announcement in February 1947, by the British colonial government that they were going to withdraw from India and transfer power to the Indians, before June 1948¹¹¹ sparked off Indian communal tension also reflected in Kenya. It became complex, following the partition of Indian sub-continent into India and Pakistan in 1947. Hindus and Sikhs formed India and Muslims their own Pakistan. At the time of partition, Punjab (the Sikhs province) was divided into two, East Punjab and West Punjab. In each, fighting broke out between the alliance of Hindus and Sikhs on one side against the Muslims on the other¹¹². In Kenya, similar animosity was witnessed. On August 16, 1947, the day preceding India's independence, violent protest broke out among the Indians near Khoja Mosque Nairobi. The Sikhs and Hindus united against the Muslims. Either group wielded stones, iron bars, sticks against another. The ugly situation was controlled by the African police, who formed a human

shield between the two groups ready to go on war.¹¹³ Thus, the reminiscence of India's independence struggles united the Sikhs and Hindus and distanced them from the Muslims. As a result weakened India's political opposition to colonial government in Kenya.

The wedge of animosity was driven deeper between Muslims and Sikhs following the massacre of the Sikhs. In the North West District of India, where the Sikhs were a minority there was a crusade to remove them. Sikhs' houses and property was either looted and or burnt, many Sikhs lost their lives some of them were burnt alive. There was loss of between 200,000 to 250,000 lives of non-Muslims and property worth rupees 20,000 million¹¹⁴.

The Muslims and Hindus politics of communal representation in Kenya catalysed by the Sikhs was made worse by the colonial government. The involvement of the colonial government intensified hatred between Muslims on one side and Hindus and Sikhs on the other. At the end the colonial authority enacted laws which jeopardised even the initial unity between Sikhs and Hindus. The Legislative Council (amendment) bill 1948 in effect reserved two seats for Muslims¹¹⁵ this encouraged the Sikhs to demand for the same provision in subsequent years which had been expressed earlier in 1946 when they formed "Central Sikh Council"¹¹⁶. In the same period Sri Guru Singh Sabha and the Central Sikh Council led by its founder B. Singh Baint, demanded for one of the three seats which had been reserved for the Hindu dominated East Africa Indian National Congress. The Sikhs' demand was partially fulfilled eight years later. In June 1948, B. Singh Biant the then leader of, Sikh Central Council after he was appointed president of Nairobi Indian Association¹¹⁷ he asserted Sikhs' communal interest, made ambitious demands outside the legal provision. In disregard of the Sikhs numerical strength advocated for the reservation of three seats for Sikhs in the Legislative Council and two for the Muslims. Sikhs were

10.8% of the Indian population and Muslims were 28.2% Sikhs were 10, 621, while the Hindus were 51, 395 and Muslims were 27,585¹¹⁸.

After the 1952 elections, the Sikhs started to drift from the alliance, which they had with the E.A.I.N.C. This followed the recognition of Muslims' separate representation, which made Sikhs revisit their demand for their ethnic representation. In October, 1953, the Ramgarhia board united with the Central Sikh Association.¹¹⁹ Like in December 1945 when the Indian Muslims walked out of the meeting of the congress, the Sikhs, in 1954, left the meeting of Nairobi Indian Association in protest because of the Association's move which did not accede to the Sikhs' pursuance of separatist politics¹²⁰. In the same year, the Sikhs took another step to the fragmentation of Indian unity. They sent a deputation of twelve members to the Governor demanding their own communal seats¹²¹. The deputation consisted of a cross section of Sikhs, from Mombasa, Nakuru, Kericho, Molo and Elburgon. The Sikhs demand was supported by the white settlers¹²² because it drove a wedge of disunity among Indians.

The deputation requested the Governor to nominate a Sikh, in case none of them was elected on the three seats then reserved for the Congress.¹²³ Three years later, their demand was conceded to, with the nomination of Kirpal Singh Sagoo in 1956.¹²⁴

After India's independence, the Sikhs led by Tara Singh and later by Sant Fateh Singh in pursuit of their distinct identity got distanced from the newly independent government of India since they were denied an exclusive Punjabi-speaking state. This drove Sikhs to distrust the Delhi government because it was seen as a threat to their culture enshrined in their language and their holy book written in Punjabi. They raised voices demanding Punjabi Suba. This culminated into the partition of Punjab into Haryana (Hindu speaking) and Punjab (Punjabi speaking), this was done along linguistic lines on November, 1, 1966.

The Sikhs leadership of the East Africa Indian National Congress, Kenya section, represented by N.S. Mangat from 1954, went along way to arouse racial rivalry between Indians and Africans. After having been appointed as president of EAINC, Mangat distanced the EAINC from African nationalists by being racial and derogatory.¹²⁵ He was opposed to Indian's support of the African's animosity to the British colonial government¹²². He, thus, made the Congress appear as a hindrance to African nationalism. In 1954, for example, following the murder of two Asian youths¹²⁶ N.S Mangat, asked the colonial government to enlist Indian youths in guarding their community.

Similarly, while the president of EAINC, N.S Mangat released statements which went a long way to retard the legal transformations in Kenya and enhanced the isolation EAINC.¹²⁵ He supported Lyttelton plan in disregard of the hindrances it put on the path of democratisation process in Kenya. His support drove EAINC to appear abating communal roll, white settler's rule and safeguard of minority rights. The Africans, Arabs including the white settlers repudiated the Lyttelton plan. The Africans opposed the Lyttelton plan because it approved reservations for minorities to the legislative council, safeguard of communal roll at the expense of common roll and instead of elected Africans provided for nomination. The Africans wanted majority seats in the Legislative Council.

Interestingly there was a Sikh Jaswant Singh amongst the lawyers who defended the Mau Mau leaders; Jomo Kenyatta (who later became first President of Kenya), Fred Kubai, Paul Ngei, Richard Ochieng Oneko, Bildad Kaggia and Kungu Karumba after their arrest on Oct. 20 1952¹²⁹. Jaswant's continuous pursuance of justice in the case, was declared *persona non grata* by the colonial government¹³⁰ on ground that he was determined to win a case described as "Queen against Kenyatta and others"¹³¹. Except for Richard Ochieng Oneko released on bond after an appeal, all the other accused were found guilty of managing a proscribed movement "Mau Mau." It had been proscribed on August, 12, 1950. Jomo Kenyatta was sentenced to ten years imprisonment, with hard labour as the

other five were sentenced to ten years imprisonment with hard labour for the first seven years.

Meanwhile Sikhs' political representation was conspicuous in the local authority. At Nairobi City Council, for example, between 1951 to 1962 Sikhs' representation at Nairobi was immense. included Bakhshish Singh Sian, Balwant Singh, Mohan Singh, Ganga Singh Matharu, Hem Singh Bhangra, Santokh Singh Mehta, T.S Nandhra and Mota Singh.¹³² In 1953, four Sikhs represented Nairobi City Council, they were, Alderman Mohan Singh, Hem Singh Bhangra, Santokh Singh Mehta and Bakhshish Singh Matharu. While at the Council Sikhs became representative on various committees. During his time at Nairobi City Council, T.S Nandhra worked on various committees, for example, General Purpose Committee, Public Health Committee, Works Committee, Town Planning Committee including Finance Committee.¹³³ Sikh representation on the local government did not cease in colonial Kenya. The most recent Sikh leader in post- colonial Kenya was Gurdev Singh, the immediate former concillor of Junju Kilifi.

Thus, the Sikhs' political role in Kenya as was India, resulted from the rivalry of the Indians' communal political struggle and the Colonial statutes. This scenario gave two phases of Sikhs' impact. The first phase was when they were aligned to the general Indian political struggles and second, they became catalysts in enhancing the disintegration of Indians political unity. The Muslims demand for communal assertion forced the Sikhs to pressurise for the same provision. Consequently the two communities played part in weakening the Indians' struggle against the white settlers. Largely however the Sikhs' political role in Kenya was loyalist, and behind scenes.

END NOTES

1. Census of Kenya 1911 (NRBI Govt Printer 1912) p.3 Report on non-native census enumeration made in the colony and protectorate of Kenya 1926 (NRBI Govt Printer 1927) p.52.
2. Raghbir Singh and Bakshish Singh Oral Interview April, 1997 India. Raghbir Singh is a professor of History University of Guru Nanak Dev. Amritsar India. Bakshish Singh at University of Punjabi Patiala. According to them Sikhs who migrated from India were peasants who went out of India to seek economic gains.
3. Jagjiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of Punjab Historical studies. p. 138.
4. Parveen Paul, Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India Oral Interview April 1997. Rajiv, A. Kapur, Sikh Separatism 'the politics of faith' Vikas Pub House. Pvt Ltd 1987; New Delhi p. 19.
5. Raghbir Singh is a professor of History University of Guru Nanak Dev. Amritsar India op cit. Oral Interview Amritsar, April, 1997.
6. Ibid.
7. Jagjiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of History Punjab Historical Studis, Punjab University Patiala. pp 134-136
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. p. 136
10. Ibid.
11. J.S Grewal, Retired Professor Of History Punjab University Chandigarh, India. Oral Interview, April, 1997.
12. Jagjiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of Historical Studies Punjabi University Patiala History p. 137.
13. Ganda Singh , A Brief Account of Sikh People Delhi Gurudwara Management Committee sis-Ganj, Chandani Chowk, Delhi. PP 62,63. gives summary of events leading to the emergence Ghadarite movement and Koma Kata Malu. The Ghadarite movement broke the loyalist history of the Sikhs and the British. since the Anglo-Sikh war 1949 to 1915.
14. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh, India Oral Interview April 1997.
15. Jagjiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of Historical Studies Punjabi University, Patiala p. 138.
16. Ibid.
17. At a meeting held at T.A Wood's Hotel in January 1902, the white settlers wrote a letter to Charles Elliot, the then Commissioner, that immigration of Indians was detrimental to European settler in particular and the natives inhabitants generally. See article by George Bennett 'Settlers and Politics in Kenya' in History of East Africa by Vincent Harlow and Alison Smith vol. ii Nairobi 1965, P265.
18. Channan Singh "Later Asian Protest Movement" in Ogot B. A. Politics and Nationalism in Kenya p. 187.
19. Indian Quarterly Register (1924), 1, 306-311.
20. Ross, M. W. Kenya From Within A Short Political History.(London) Allen and Unwin 1927 p. 323
21. Ibid. p. 385.

22. Hon. Shams, Deen presidential address at the second inter-territorial conference at Nairobi, to the Defence Regulation April 1944, P4.
23. Report by the Government of India Delegation to East Africa on the proposed Immigration Restriction, Govt. of India Press, New Delhi 1946.
24. Sessional Paper No.78, of 1956, pp5, 19. Also see Colonial Office Report on the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1956,P18
25. Indians abroad Kenya-Bombay roll No 611 CA July 1963 pp 19-23. Indian Acts applied in East Africa Protectorate see F.O. 2/533 p456.
26. Ross, M. W. Kenya From Within. A Short Political History. London, Allen and Unwin, 1927 p. 344
27. Jaggiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of Historical Studies Punjabi University, Patiala. p. 86.
28. F.O2/204 Johnstone to Salisbury, Oct 13, 1899. Oliver, R; Sir Harry Johnstone and The Scramble for Africa (London 1959) also see Mangat,J.S: A History of Asians in East Africa. p. 40
29. Churchill W. S. My African Journey (London 1908)p. 49
30. Raghbir Singh Oral Interview, op cit. Indu Bunga Oral interview April, 1997 Professor of History Punjab University, Chandigarh.
31. Acting Commissioner Hobley To Lansdowne Telegrams July 19, F.O 2/845
32. See 'Paper relating to East Africa (London, 1907) H.L. 158, pp 15 -25.
33. Elgin To Saddler, July 17, 1906, in H.L. 158(1907) PP 41-43 appointment of land board (August 24, 1907)
34. Correspondence regarding land segregation in E.A. Protectorate See Elgin to Saddler March 19, 1908 Correspondence, Cd. 4117 P33.
35. Ross, M. W: Kenya From Within A Short Political History London; Allen and Unwin, 1927 p39.
36. East Africa Protectorate (London 1908) cd 4117.pp. 26 - 7
37. Governor's Conference Report. Appendix No. 8 Commission Report on Closer Union of the Dependence in Eastern and Central Africa (London 1927 CMD 3234).
38. The qualification for one to apply in ex-Soldier, were that, one was to be a British subject of purely European extraction. In Independent Kenya Indians count this as their contribution in Kenya see Sunday Nation 20th, Oct 1996 p.7.
39. Huxley Elspeth White Man's Country (2Vols London, 2nd ed, 1953) PP4,15.
40. Ibid.
41. Hill, Mervyn F The Story of The Kenya and Uganda Railway Vol. ii pp135-6.
42. Huxley Elspeth White Man's Country (2Vols London, 2nd ed, 1953) P39.
43. Lou Singh Khalsa Angrez Oral interview October 191996. See his book Understanding Sikhism, Is Sikh Way for Me. Pub.1985, Selangor Malaysia 1990. P18.
44. Gilbert Lobos' letter to the editor SIKH GAZETTE FORUM, Delhi, July 1-15,1986 Also see Jaggiwan, Singh. Mohan Walia; "The Role of Sikhs in National freedom Struggle" in 'Punjab Past and Present' Vol. XXIV-I April 1990 serial No. 47. Department of Historical Studies Punjabi University. Patiala India..
45. Bhagant Singh Oral interview, An Afro-Sikh born at Kianjai Meru. A business man at Meru. See 'Now magazine' in the SUNDAY STANDARD, July,1992 p10.
46. Indians in Kenya, cmd. 1922(1923)

47 Legislative Council Debates 1939. See Order in Council to define White

Highlands Legislative Council. Debates, 11-13, August 1937, and 28-29. April 1938. Also see Legislative Council Debates April 1939.

48. Renouta S. Oral Interview June 1997. He was the chairman of Sikh Supreme Council. Oral interview Lochab family; they own land at Narok, where they grow wheat on large scale.
49. British East Africa India Association was formed to co-ordinate Indian political affairs and counter the white settler organisations. Both colonist Association and (BEAIA) presented complaints to W. S. Churchill in 1907 when he visited East Africa Protectorate.
50. Ross M. W. Kenya From Within A Short Political History, Allen and Unwin 1927. pp.169, 171-2 Bennett, P 32 and Mungcam p. 225.
51. Raghbir Singh Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, India Oral Interview April, 1997.
52. Ibid.
53. Report of the first session of East Africa Indian National Congress, 7-8 March, 1914, enclosed in Belfield to SSC, 1 May 1914, in C.O 533/157. During the formation of E. A. Indian National congress, there was no Sikh who came out to oppose its formation, neither did they condemn or distance themselves from the organisation. Mangat J. S concurs that the formation of East Africa Indian National Congress by Asians, was a step towards the formation of Indian concerted political force to fight settlers organisation. See Mangat J. S. A History of Asians in East Africa P. 109.
54. Huxley Elspeth White Man's Country Lord Delamere And the Making of Kenya (2Vols London, ed, 1956) p122 They were resolutions of the convention of Association known as Irreducible Minimum Principles of June 1919. They were intended to limit Sikhs and other Asians rights.
55. Bowing to C.O, 25 March 1918, in C. O 533/194. Also see Northey to Co. June 5 1919 in C.O 533/210
56. Hansard, 5th, ser. 41-161 July, 6, 1920
57. The racial sentiments expressed by the Economic Commission were enough forces which made the Sikhs to identify with other Indians. Hansard, 5th, ser. 41. 161 Lea Dec, 21 1918 p. 15. See Ross M. W. Kenya From Within A Short Political History London, Allen and Unwin, 1927 p. 322, reports the Economic Commission resolutions.
58. Ross, M. W. Kenya From Within A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1927. p. 323
59. Ibid.
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62. Milner to Bowing, May 21, 1920, in Kenya official gazette, August 18, 1920, pp774-6.
63. Official gazette May 18, 1920.
64. Report by Sir Benjamin Robertson, August 4, 1920. Cmd. 1312 (1921).
65. Ross, M.W Kenya From Within. Kenya From Within ;A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1927 p. 332.

- 66 Ibid P333.
- 67 The TIMES Jan 28, 1922. See Churchill's Dinner speech in India annual Register (1922) 11, 282 - 283.
68. The TIMES Jan, 28, 1922, see Ross M. W. Kenya From Within :A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1927 p. 353.
69. Ibid.
70. August, 15 1921 Parliamentary, Debates, House of Commons (11, July 1922) col. 1157.
71. Ibid. Also see Summary of Wood-Winterton Report That reached Nairobi, Indians in Kenya, Cmd.1922(1923), pp6-8
72. Ross M. W. Kenya From Within, A Short Political History (London) Allen and Unwin 1927 (London 1927) p. 375-6. See East Africa Standard Feb. 10 1923 p. 21
73. Indian Review (Madras, Dec. 1926) p. 815
74. Efforts were carried forward by Leopold Stennet Amery, Secretary of State, through Governor Edward Grigg, to do away with the provisions of Devonshire White Paper' Amery L.S My Political Life(London) 360-1.
75. Legislative Council. Debates, Nov. 5, 1926, pp642-54.
76. Kenya Land Commission, Evidence and Memoranda, Col 91 (1934), vol. iii pp2882-6.
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78. EAST AFRICA STANDARD, 11, 4, 1947.
79. Ibid.
80. Chanan Singh "Later Asian Protest Movement" In Ogot B. A. Politics and Nationalism in Kenya P 179.
81. Joginder Singh Oral Interview, August 1996. He vividly recalls the crowd, which formed the burial procession after the execution of the assailants.
82. Defence (employment of Artisan Regulation (Nairobi Printer 1942) and Defence (Indian Clerks) Regulation (NRBI Govt Printer 1942).
83. East Africa Standard Nairobi 26/1/1943 P.3
84. Legislative Council Debates, April 21, 1939.
85. Colonial Times (NRB) Jan, 26, 1943 P. 3
- 86 J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh, Oral Interview, April 1997. See Ganda, Singh A Brief Account of the Sikh People (Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee Sis - Ganj Chandani Chowk, Delhi 1988) p. 25, 26
87. John Malcolm Sketch of The Sikhs, quoted a contemporary Mohammedan Author, cited by Ganda Singh in Brief Accounts of Sikh People pp. 36-37
88. J.S Grewal Retired Professor of History Punjab University Chandigarh, India. Oral Interview, April 1997.
89. Kenya Authenticated Ordinance 1941-1942, Colonial office (co. 630/15). Prior to the enactment of this constitution the Indian councillors were nominated by the Governor. See EAINC Rec. reel, 10.
90. East African Standard July, 2, 1946, p. 3
91. East Africa Standard July, 28, 1946 p. 3
92. Khushwant Singh History of the Sikhs P. 220 Morley-Minto reform scheme of 1909, perpetuated the hatred that was then rife in India between the Muslim league and Indian National Congress. The Sikhs raised the demand of separate representation in the legislative council, however the three contestable seats were all taken by the Muslims.
93. Chief Khalsa Address No. 5075 of December 26th 1916, addressed to Chief Secretary, Punjab Govt.

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100. Quresh's letter to Nairobi Indian Association 17th Dec. 1945. In EAINC Records KNA reel 10.
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102. Raghbir Singh, Lecturer Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, India Oral Interview. April 1997.
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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The study confirms that Sikhs' internal cohesion is based on Sikhism. The Sikhs' inter-communal relationship and impact in Kenya was determined and directed by their geographical origin, their inter-communal historical and religious past with other Indians, the Muslims and Hindus, the permeation of stereotypes and racial laws which compounded them into a political and social unit.

By origin, the Sikhs like other Indians were socially close because they had come from the Indian-Subcontinent. The racial political and economic laws in Kenya reinforced their union by restricting them to a common residential, commercial and employment. This revived memories of their common origin. This also sparked off animosity. On the historical plane, Sikhs were closer to the Hindus. They had a history of unity, which resulted from common suffering at the hands of the Muslims. Similarly the Sikh founder Gurus had been Hindus converted to Sikhs. Thus, Sikhs and Hindus were culturally closer than with the Indian Muslims. Sikhs though with a different meaning, kept and celebrated Hindu festivals.

The white settlers and colonial government enhanced social unity of Sikhs and other Indians by treating immigrants from Indian sub-continent as a homogenous community and inferior race. They underrated their hygiene, religion and culture as incapable of civilising Africans. Similarly, the long period of Sikhs' political representation by the Hindu dominated (EAINC) ensured their political solidarity and identity of the two, also reflected on the social plane. Up to 1956 members of (EAINC) represented the Sikhs in Legislative Council, until the nomination of Kirpal Singh Sagoo.

The racial economic and political laws in colonial Kenya determined the Sikhs and Africans social relationship. The spread of stereotypes about the Sikhs and Africans were implicit in racial laws, enhanced by the British divide and rule policy and the legacies of Hindu caste amongst a section the Sikhs, which placed the Africans, racially below them. Sikhs who married Africans were without approval of Sikh community. The parents and

offspring of such matrimonial liaison were subjected to racial discrimination. The failure of spreading Sikhism in Kenya reflected the same reasons.

The Sikhs' social institutions included the temples, schools and hospitals. The temples and schools were not established to encourage inter-communal liaison but were put up to safeguard Sikhs' religious beliefs. Temples were Sikh centres for spiritual nourishment where discussions and decisions regarding political, social and economic policies which affected their life were addressed. Schools were first established for Sikhs' exclusivity to counter school segregation laws between Indians and whites. At Independence the institutions became non-racial following government policy and not through Sikhs' ethnic initiative. At that time Sikh schools became important centres for dissemination of knowledge not only to the Sikhs but also to the Africans, whose entry in these schools increased following the abolition of racial laws.

Sikhs' impact in Kenya's economy superseded racial boundaries, much as it was akin to their economic survival. In Kenya's colonial economy the Sikhs aligned with skill oriented jobs. About 70% of the Sikhs were Ramgarhias with artisanary background. On the railway they were constructors and drivers of engine. Their participation on the railway construction similarly aligned them to economic exploration of East Africa Protectorate. The Railway, meanwhile, remained the Indians' major economic role in colonial Kenya. At the end of the Railway construction, the Sikhs business community took the risk of penetrating in the interior by use of Indian transport system of the animal drawn carts. They later used bicycles and lorries. As the Sikhs moved towards economic and social integration in East Africa Protectorate, some intermarried with African women, partly to ensure the survival of their business ventures and others to fulfill their religious duty of an ideal Sikh and largely as a result of scarce Sikh women. However, this became a factor for determining their level of integration in comparison to other Indians. In theory Sikhism has no restriction in the selection of marriage partners.

Sikhs in colonial economy were intermediaries whose role included bulking, debulking and extension of money economy. On the same wavelength the Sikhs took an indirect role of transforming the traditional barter system of trade in East Africa. Sikhs' process of economic development became an example for Africans who made forays in economic enterprises. With passage of time associated with new and changing societal needs and changed economic avenues Sikhs changed profession based on caste orientations in job selection. Similarly the racial economic regulations deflected many Sikhs from rural to become urban dwellers.

The Sikhs' economic role in Kenya was also molded by the African business transaction system and high transport costs from the Coast to the interior. The racial colonial policies, which pushed Sikhs and other Indians in the same geographical and economic sphere that led to suspicion between Sikhs and Africans, also occasioned by animosity from African communities. The diseases like malaria, dysentery, cholera, and the menace of jiggers and man-eater lions also affected the Sikhs economic role. This was in addition to global recessions and world wars. During the First World War and economic recession 1920, 1930 and 1958, the Sikhs had to undergo low business turnover. However the business community took advantage of economic stability of 1916-1918, and 1922-1929. In the middle of 1930's colonial government institutionalised economic restriction aimed at curbing exploitation, and due to its racial orientations affected the Sikh business community.

The Second World War period not only saw the emergence and prosperity of the business community in Kenya but how the Sikhs' took advantage of economic opportunities. During the post World War II the business community prospered. Amongst the Sikhs it was associated with erection of religious centres. The Sikh business community took advantage of colonial policies and the tariffs instituted to protect the Sterling pound from the dollar. As Sikh businessmen got entangled in trade, they deviated from observance of their religious ideals of the means leading to acquisition as was underlined in Sikhism and became driven

by the target, regardless of the means. Consequently, they failed to live up to their religious tenets. In their intermediary position the Sikhs earned profits and started to establish economic empire.

Meanwhile the Sikhs' organisation of business along kinship ties resulted into racial economic tension with Africans. This scenario was made complex by racial hierarchical arrangement of colonial economy. This deflected the Sikhs economic role in colonial Kenya and made it source of racial hatred and suspicion.

Sikhs role in Kenya's nationalistic struggle was loyal and otherwise. On political plane, Sikhs were largely loyalists. Their politics of confrontation with the colonial authorities was asserted and sustained by Makhan Singh. His determination epitomised Sikhs' ideals, engrained among the Sikhs over generations. This was reflected by his love for humanity, repudiation of oppression, integration and sustenance of militancy in the workers union. Makhan Singh's role was inconsistent with Indian exclusiveness enshrined in caste legacies amongst the Sikhs and other Indians. In the process Makhan Singh africanised himself. He was neither aligned to the Africans, nor to the Indians but made efforts to unite workers regardless of their race, occupation, religion or creed and above all without regard to personal gain. He transformed a racially organised Indian's labour organisation Kenya Indian Labour Trade Union, into a multi-racial organisation with a clause which opened to all workers: the Labour Trade Union of Kenya (LTUK). Makhan Singh started worker's struggle in Kenya by integrating Indian workers into the larger Kenyan society and then projected efforts towards transforming it, into a regional body, the Labour Trade Union of East Africa (LTUEA). He emphasised abolition of unjust labour laws and strove for uniform labour laws in East Africa. He founded the epitome of regional workers union, the East Africa Trade Congress (EATUC). The use of Kiswahili and English in addition to other Indian languages were factors that brought Kenyan society closer workers union. Makhan Singh participated in labour protests that exerted pressure leading forth implementation of

the workers demands and for removal arbitrary labour laws. Makhan Singh while secretary of (EATUC), and Fred Kubai as its President sought to establish an egalitarian-working environment, where all were treated as equals and paid according to the job grade. The workers organisations endeavored for the standardisation of a days work and correlated time and monetary payment for workers. Eight- hour period was made official working hours for a day and any extra work after official time became "overtime".

After having started worker's struggle, Makhan Singh ended up as a nationalist. While working in conjunction with Fred Kubai. They organised the boycott of the celebrations of elevating Nairobi municipality to a city in 1950, citing inequality of development in Nairobi among the whites, Indians and Africans. The crucial role of Makhan Singh was underlined in the fact that while he protested against inequality of municipal representation at Nairobi, Sikhs were not only members of the municipal council but were better treated than Africans. Consequently the boycott of celebrations spearheaded by Makhan Singh associated him with Kenya's nationalism, a liberator whose attributes transcended community loyalty. In 1950 Makhan Singh demanded for total independence of Kenya.

Makhan Singh did not succeed to unite the Indians and Africans into a concerted force either as unionist or as nationalist to fight colonialism in Kenya. As he drew the Africans to the workers organisation, many Indians withdrew from the labour organisation and left it largely to the Africans. To a larger extent however Makhan Singh transformed trade unionism into a multi-racial workers society. The trade unionists and nationalists played a complementary role not only in the creating consciousness among the oppressed but also in the exertion of pressure on the colonialists.

The larger part of Sikhs' politics in Kenya was loyalist, often behind scenes. Their (Sikhs') initial political participation in Kenya was overshadowed by the general Indian political struggles. The loyalists path of the Sikhs in politics was influenced partly by their

small numbers. Sikhs who migrated to Kenya had come from a loyalist background in India. Later they aligned to Hindu dominated East Africa Indian National Congress (EAINC). Sikhs' in colonial Kenya held middle rank positions and were part of the system. This was made complex by the unknown foreign environment whose future they could not predict. Most Sikh immigrants were economically inclined rather than political struggles.

Meanwhile the circumstances into which the Sikhs found themselves forced them to identify with immigrants from the Indian sub-continent. The European racial laws applied in colonial Kenya overshadowed the religious differences of the immigrants from the Indian Sub-continent and put them on a common footing. Racial laws gave the immigrants a unique meaning not as Sikhs, Muslims or Hindus but as Indians or Asians who held inferior middle level position politically, socially and economically to that of white settlers. The racial immigration and land laws were applied to all immigrants from the Indian sub-continent. Segregation in allocation of residential and commercial land bound the Sikhs and other Indians together as a social, economic and political unit and thus directed their political role. The racial laws enhanced competition between immigrants from Indian Sub-continent and the white settlers over, land, trade and political sovereignty in Kenya. The initial integration of Indian institutions gave the Sikhs and other Indians a common identity. The withdrawal of the same institution was also a threat to the Sikhs survival in Kenya as it was to other Indians. The establishment of whites political organisations against all Indians united the immigrants from Indian Sub-continent.

In 1942, apart from the Sikhs' assertion of the militant role, there was a clear demonstration of the British policy of divide and rule. Sikh youths while asserting resistance to oppression killed their fellow Indian, Isher Dass. He was associated with the implementation of conscription orders. The Sikh youths partially deflected Sikhs loyalist political attributes in Kenya.

The communal politics that the Sikhs engaged were however not variance to their

loyalist path with colonial authority but to the intra-Indian communal political unity. The Sikhs' closeness to the Hindus who dominated EAINC influenced Indian Muslims who accordingly felt detached from the union of the two. In 1946 the Sikhs made ethnic demands which went along way to tear the Indian political unity in Kenya, at the advantage of the white settlers. In that year the Sikhs demanded for one of their own seat in the Kenya's colonial Legislative Council. Ten years later Sikhs' efforts of separatism supported by white settlers was rewarded by the nomination of Kirpal Singh Sagoo to the legislative council.

The appointment of a Sikh to the Legislative Council marked the adoption of the Sikhs' politics at the centre. It also enhanced Sikhs' unity at the expense of Indian's political unity and weakened their concerted opposition to the white settlers in Kenya. This marked the sharpening of Sikh/Muslim communal rivalry in Kenya.

Earlier, in 1954 a Sikh N.S Mangat , the president of EAINC isolated EAINC from both the Africans and the genuine Indian supporters of African cause. He opposed the legal transformations in Kenya and advocated for pursuance of racism in EAINC. This excited racial sentiments.

As a distinct group Sikhs social role aimed at safeguarding religion and its practices. In economic realm Sikhs took up security and skill oriented occupations. By 1963 Sikhs were mechanics, contractors carpenters, Railway men and businessmen. Unlike India Sikhs in Kenya, politically remained behind scenes and were sandwiched in the general Indian community. Later Sikhs catalysed the disintegration of Indian political unity by demanding for their separate representation. Makhan Singh's role in trade unionism brought Sikhs closer to African and highlighted their ideals as a militant, self-sacrificing community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Sikhs are an independent community from other Asian communities, they are united by their traditions, culture and religion.
2. A comparative study of the Sikhs and other Indians in Kenya. By focusing at differences and similarities and stating reasons in each case.

3. A comparative study of the Sikhs in Kenya and those in developed countries, and between those in Kenya and any other developing African country.
4. An inter-disciplinary study of the Sikhs as a religious community and a historical group, in order to bring to light the continuity and discontinuity between the two fields.
5. Studies of Punjabi language so as to enable researchers carry out interviews in Punjabi and read immense Punjabi literature.

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